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Reducing homophobia through audiovisual narratives in Serbia: the impact of positive depiction of gay people on audience attitudes

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Doctoral thesis

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Abstract

The objective of the present study is to analyze the impact of audiovisual fiction on attitudes towards gay people within the specific Serbian culture. Particularly, this study observes the processes explaining attitude change towards homosexuality through a positive representation of gay men depicted in the film *The Parade* (2011). The study was based on a sample of 200 college students (M = 21.64, SD = 2.27). We applied a quasi-experimental research design and divided all participants into two groups: an experimental group (N=150), and a control group (N=50). There were two phases of data collection separated by 30 days. Firstly, we collected data in the pre-test: All the participants filled in a questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic information and the instrument H25 measuring homophobia. One month later, we performed a second data collection. In this phase, the experimental group and the control group differed in some of the tasks they were asked to complete. The experimental group watched the film, and after the exposure, filled in a questionnaire measuring homophobia, identification with the character, intergroup contact and the third person effect. On the other hand, the control group did not watch the film, and once again filled in a questionnaire measuring homophobia. We applied quantitative method in order to identify subjacent relations between the variables, and to determine magnitudes of their effects. Main results reveal that experimental group, compared with a control group, showed more favorable attitude towards gay people. Results also found that men expressed higher level of homophobia than women. Identification with character was positively associated with acceptance of homosexuality. We also obtained positive correlation between the identification and intergroup contact. Religiosity and the third person effect were negatively associated with homophobia score. The less identification with the character the participants achieved, the higher level of religiosity, and the third person effect they expressed. In conclusion, the study makes a general contribution by reinforcing the results of previous media effect related studies, and finds their relevance within the Serbian context.

Keywords: homophobia, attitudes, attitude change, identification, persuasion, third person effect, religiosity.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio fue analizar el impacto que ejerce la ficción audiovisual sobre las actitudes hacia las personas homosexuales en el contexto específico de la cultura serbia. En particular, este estudio observa los procesos que explican el cambio de actitud hacia las personas homosexuales a través de la película titulada *La Parada* (2011), que conlleva una representación positiva de los hombres homosexuales. En el estudio participaron 200 estudiantes universitarios (M = 21.64, SD = 2.27). Se aplicó un diseño de investigación cuasi-experimental en la que todos los participantes fueron divididos en dos grupos: un grupo experimental (N= 150), y un grupo de control (N = 50). La recogida de datos se realizó en dos fases separadas por un período de 30 días. En la primera fase se recogieron los datos del pre-test: todos los participantes rellenaron un cuestionario que contenía la información socio-demográfica y el instrumento H25 que medía la homofobia. Al cabo de un mes, se realizó una segunda recogida de datos. En esta fase, el grupo experimental vio la película, y después del visionado, rellenó un cuestionario que medía la homofobia, la identificación con el personaje, el contacto intergrupal, así como el efecto de la tercera persona. Por otro lado, el grupo de control no vio la película, y volvió a rellenar el cuestionario que contenía el instrumento H25 de medición de la homofobia. Se aplicó un método cuantitativo con el fin de identificar las relaciones entre las variables subyacentes, y para determinar magnitudes de sus efectos. Los resultados principales revelan que el grupo experimental, en comparación con el grupo de control ha mostrado la actitud más favorable hacia las personas homosexuales. Los resultados asimismo indican que los hombres expresaron un mayor nivel de homofobia respecto a las mujeres. La identificación con el personaje homosexual se asoció positivamente con la aceptación de la homosexualidad después del visionado de la película. Igualmente, se obtuvo una correlación positiva entre el contacto intergrupal y la identificación con el personaje. La religiosidad y el efecto de la tercera persona se asociaron negativamente con los niveles de homofobia. La menor identificación con el personaje fue asociada con los niveles más altos de religiosidad y del efecto de tercera persona. Al encontrar su relevancia dentro del contexto serbio, nuestra investigación hace una contribución general a los estudios anteriores que conciernen a las influencias y los efectos de las ficciones audiovisuales en el cambio de actitud.

Palabras clave: homofobia, actitudes, cambio de actitud, identificación, persuasión, el efecto de tercera persona, religiosidad.

Table of contents

List of tables

List of figures

1. Introduction

Ever since the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Former Yugoslavia was signed in November 1995 by ex Yugoslav politicians, the issue of “normalizing” homosexuality and consequently the concept of homophobia have been raised in the overall territory of former Yugoslavia.

Within a general Anti-Discrimination Law[1], Serbian Government (2009) adopted a legislation explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

On the other hand, as the Law on Gender Equality has not been adopted yet, The Serbian law does not recognize marriage between people of the same sex (Visnjic, 2013).

Despite certain improvements in the field of legal protection of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals, Queers and Intersexual (LGBTQI) people and other minority groups in Serbia, the Annual Report of Gay Straight Alliance[2] (2015) indicates that the adopted legislation remains meaningless, given that its implementation has not been proved in practice.

As Visnjic (2013) argues, the principal reason for such a high level of discrimination is the weakness of institutions and even the lack of political will in the promotion of LGBTQI human rights in Serbia. It has been clearly demonstrated by the attempts to organize the Pride Parade.

[1] Anti-Discrimination Law 3/2009, dated on March 26, introduces a systemic law as a basis for integral and general anti-discrimination protection in all areas. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, nº 22/2009. Retreived from http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs/images/files/zakon-o-zabrani-diskriminacije.pdf 15.12.2015

[2] Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) is an organization that carries mission of human rights promotion and protection for all citizens of Serbia, with particular focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQI) persons. Supplementary data Gay Straight Alliance are available on the organization Web site (http://gsa.org.rs/) Retreived from http://gsa.org.rs/ 15.12.2015.

In 2014, Gay Straight Alliance (2014) conducted a comprehensive survey of public opinion on the topic of perception of homosexuality in Serbia showing that half of the homosexual respondents experienced some kind of violence, and that 15 % of them were victims of physical violence. More than half of all cases of violence occurred in a public place.

However, Visnjic (2014) reveals that many victims of such violent attack cases are not reported to the police, primarily due to the lack of trust in state institutions and the legal system, and on the other hand, because of the fear of public disclosure of their own sexual orientation.

According to Annual Report on LBTQI rights in Serbia, Labris[3] (2014) accounts that after three consecutive years of prohibition, The Pride Parade was held in Belgrade on 28 September 2014. The event was secured by a very strong police forces supported by combat vehicles and water cannons, and there were about 6,000 police officers on the streets of Belgrade.

Reporting on Serbia's progress to its strategic goal of EU accession, European Commission (2014[4], 2015[5]) repeatedly emphasize general improvements in view of human rights, given that the Pride Parade was held without major incidents. In reality, according to Labris (2014), there were more than 50 people arrested mainly for possession of fireworks and other illegal cold weapons. In addition, gay marriage as a step forward toward social acceptance

[3] Labris is one of the oldest lesbian human rights organizations in the region (founded in Belgrade in 1995). Their mission is to work on elimination of all forms of violance and discrimination against LGBTQI people and to establish a more equal society. Supplementary data on Labris are available on the organization Web site (http://labris.org.rs/). Retreived from http://labris.org.rs/en/sample-page/ 12.08.2015

[4]Serbia Progress Report (2014). Retreived from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140108-serbia-progress-report_en.pdf / 07.05.2016.

[5] Serbia Progress Report (2015). Retreived from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2015/20151110_report_serbia.pdf / 07.05.2016.

of gay people[6] in Serbia is obviously still far away in comparison to many other European countries.

In opposition to Serbia, social acceptance of homosexuality at European level is quite encouraging. Most of the developed European countries have already allowed gay marriage: The Netherlands (2000), Belgium (2003), Spain (2005), Sweden (2009), Norway (2009), Portugal (2010), Argentina (2010), Denmark (2012), New Zeland (2013), Brasil (2013), England (2013), France (2013), Uruguay (2013), Scotland (2014), Luxemburg (2014), Finland (2015), Ireland (2015)[7].

In this context, Herek (1996, 2009) reminds that in the past decades there had been increasing demands for equal civil rights, followed by the positive public attitudes toward sexual minorities. Despite this social struggle for empowerment of human rights, negative attitudes towards gay people are still dominant in contemporary society, given that people are generally inclined to perceive members of other groups (ethnic, racial, religious) in less favorable light than members of their own group.

Furthermore, a significant number of social psychologists (Allport, 1954; Herek, 2009; Lee, Farrell & Link, 2004; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) pay much attention to studying the attitudes of the majority population towards members of stigmatized minority groups.

On the other hand, Serbian researches, or even broadly, researches from the entire Ex-Yugoslavia region have been primarily and almost exclusively focused on attitude formation

[6] Following the recommendations of American Psychological Association (APA), we use the term *gay people* instead of commonly used term *homosexuals.* The term *gay people* as a noun, is used in this study to refer to both males and females. Supplementary data on suggestions for avoiding heterosexual bias in language concerning lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons are available on the journal Web site (http://www.apa.org). Retreived from http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/language.aspx 10.02.2016.

[7] Retreived from http://www.pewresearch.org/packages/LGBTQI-in-changing-times/ 13.08.2015.

perceived through the current status and security problems of LGBTQI in Serbia, activism effects, and violation of their human rights.

Consequently, Bosanac and Bjelic (2002) limit their research in explaining sexual orientation as one of the components that determine the identity of one person. Radoman (2012) presents a survey of attitudes toward gay people in view of the security sector in Serbia. By examining the relationship between the police and the sexual minorities, the author attempted to determine the institutional practices towards homosexuality. In other words, Radoman's (2012) research focused on the events such as the Pride Parade, and the appearance of anti-gay factions and political conflicts.

Rot (2003), on the other hand, tries only to identify the possible variables (such as gender, level of education, place of origin, etc) responsible for formation of the attitudes. Stanojevic (2009) for example takes a chronological and prevalently sociological perspective in his research enhancing the role of women in a traditional Serbian society within the context of acceptance or rejection of homosexuality. Pikic and Jugovic (2006) conduct a research focusing on the violence issue and the possible reasons and consequences of the violence over LGBTQI population, whereas, Bijelic and Cesar (2010) in their research tried to achieve a better visibility and transparency of LGBTQI people within the educational system.

Perhaps, the closest to the purposes of the present study was the research of Zezelj et al., (2007) in which they employ strategies based on resistance to persuasion with the objective to test the function of communication modality in the process of inoculation.

Findings such as these show that none of the researches deriving from the Serbian context have ever tried to answer the question whether and how, through what mechanisms, the narrative fiction can influence attitude change. In that sense, a significant contribution of the present study will be in the first place, providing quite new information on the reception and persuasive effects of narrative depicting the life of gay characters in a particular Serbian context.

Having briefly depicted the overall complexity of homophobia and social acceptance of gay people, we should introduce one of the key questions of our research: Do the narrative fictions change people's attitudes? If they do, how do/would they do it, and to what extent a narrative fiction can change attitudes? Finally, we should ask ourselves, whether narrative fiction can change people's attitudes toward gay people in Serbia?

Since one of the vital questions and objectives of this dissertation is to find out whether the exposure to media effects influences our attitudes toward homosexuality, we will try to give or provide evidence if they really do, and what their effects are, i.e what effect they have.

In attempting to meet appeals for more empirical studies on effects and representation of homosexuality (Golom & Mohr, 2011), this research explore in a local Serbian context the film effects on attitudes through positive depiction of homosexual men.

Although representation of homosexuality and attitudes towards gay people as a consequence, are strongly marked by the influence of predominant heterosexism, (D'Acci, 2004; D'Emilio,1983, 1992; Herek 1992; Plummer, 2001) the results of our study intend to provide new information, and make a contribution to other studies that had previously found empirical evidence of media's influence on the reception of homosexuals (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Lee & Hicks, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Mazur & Emmers-Sommers, 2002; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014).

Furthermore, the study is theoretically relevant because there is a large body of empirical evidences confirming the general power of persuasive effects exerted by narrative fictions (Cohen, 2001; Farr & Degroult, 2008; Igartua, 2008, 2010; Igartua & Barrios, 2012).

In that sense, Igartua and Barrios (2012) confirm that narratives (written or audiovisual) manage to provoke an illusion of reality. Therefore, the dramas and fiction based films that address the Holocaust, war, exploitation of human beings, racism or disability can excite viewers and cause an emotional impact resulting in attitude change.

Depicting an assault on a little boy that allegedly took place in a public shopping center, Green and Brock (2000) evidence changes in beliefs related to a story even knowing that the narrative was unambiguously presented as fictional. Even more, Green and colleagues (2006) suggested that narrative fictions can be as much powerful as factual in changing attitudes.

Similarly, Dixon et al., (2001) show that exposure to a film revealing all the negative aspects of the tobacco industry, causes more negative attitudes toward smoking and even induces a lower desire to continue smoking in the future.

Finally, although referring to network society, Castells (2009) suggests, (as an additional argument to the power of media effect and its capacity to persuade), that the most fundamental form of media power lies in its capacity to shape the human mind. In that sense, according to Castells (2009) there is no substantial difference between the virtual and real. What's more, the fictional aspect is more democratic and more "human" as there is equality between the members and with a free choice of potential identification with individuals, while the real world often have established certain limitations.

More specifically, a concept of identification with the characters as one of the central variables of the present research is, according to various researchers (Cohen, 2001; Igartua, 2008, 2010; Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010; Slater, Rouner & Long, 2006; Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2014), a useful persuasion strategy. In other words, persuading others to identify with the fictional characters opens new possibilities of understanding the process of persuasion and may result in attitude change.

Using as a stimulus the film *If These Walls Could Talk* (2000)[8], the empirical research of Slater et al., (2006) confirms a positive correlation between the degree of identification with the film's character and the degree of encouragement for gay couples in light of their rights to gay marriages.

In that context, Igartua (2010), using the film *A Day without a Mexican* (2004)[9], shows that an effective way to change attitudes towards vulnerable minority groups such as immigrants, is to encourage empathy with respect to a member of that group.

Recently, the study of Moyer-Guse and Nabi (2010) reveals that the identification with the characters in a dramatic narrative about the effects of unwanted pregnancies caused a greater perception of vulnerability, which ultimately was associated with increased precaution in view of safe sex behaviour.

On the other hand, variables such as inter-contact (Herek, 2000; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Hicks & Lee 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Raja y Stokes, 1998; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2013), gender as potential moderator of attitudes toward homosexuality (Herek, 1994, 2000; Simon, 1995; LaMar & Kite, 1998), religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson & Burris, 1994; Detenber, 2007; Hunsberger & Jackson, 1990; Whitley & Kite, 2010 et al.,) and the third person effect (Golan & Banning, 2008; Griffin, 2012; Johansson, 2010) are introduced as potential moderators that increase or reduce the effects of the film.

[8] DeGeneres, E. (Producer), & Heche, A. (Director). (2000).

[9] Artenstein, I. (Producer), & Arau, S. (Director). (2004).

Therefore, this brief presentation of a number of empirical researches should be viewed both, as a contribution to attitude change through narrative fiction studies, so as a stimulus and justification explaining the propensity of the present research.

Consequently, as this research focuses on mechanisms underlying narrative persuasion in view of reducing the level of homophobia in Serbia, our results may also have implications for a variety of industrially oriented purposes, as well as they can illuminate various disciplines such as areas of communication studies, media effects, education, psychology and sociology. Due to the lack of empirical studies on how gay people are perceived by audiences exposed to narratives depicting homosexual characters, this research can be observed also as a contribution to global existing academic information on reception of gay people within the media effect studies.

For that reason, apart from my personal interest, there is also an academic desire to associate the present research based upon the respective theoretical knowledge with the effectiveness in changing homosexuality-related attitudes within a specific Serbian social context. In addition, the present study also finds a social relevance in view of improvement of coexistence and acceptance of homosexuality in particular, because the contemporary trend is to normalize these attitudes. If we consider a general improvement of the quality of people's life as an ultimate goal, the final objective of this strategy will be also a change of behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and social norms in public segments of Serbian society. In order to increase acceptance of minority and socially marginalized groups, one of the most important tasks of the 21th century policies is to protect this kind of social groups (Petrovic, 2013, p.34).

A particular contribution of this empirical research will also be in exploration of the Igartua's (2010) identification scale (EDI) and its application in Serbia.

In addition, answering whether and how the narrative fiction influences attitudes in a particular social context such as Serbian, should be viewed as one of the key contributions.

As a result, all the particularities of the results obtained in this research should be viewed as a contribution to the existing theoretical framework, proposing an additional direction or stimulation for future studies. However, it should be taken into account that the degree of relevance of the present results to general implication in other societies and circumstances should always be a subject of verification.

In order to answer all the questions presented in this introductory chapter, and possibly open some new proposals for future studies, the present thesis is conceptualized as follows:

To understand better the concept of homophobia, we will firstly define homosexuality through various theoretical approaches. Further on, we will explain the Queer theory as a relatively new speculative field usually located within the lines of the theories of sexuality and gender studies.

In that sense, as a logical extension of the queer theory this chapter will also focus on the concept of homophobia as a consequence of the media representation of gay people and the media effects on formation of attitudes. Considering the fact that our research investigates attitude change toward gay people, this third chapter will also introduce theoretical approaches explaining instruments measuring homophobia as a global phenomenon, concluding with its specificities in a local Serbian context.

This part also explains the most essential characteristics, structure, functions and pertaining components of attitudes. Furthermore, this chapter will get a closer look at the measurement of attitudes because the concept of attitude measuring is vital for defining what the people’s attitudes are and whether or not they changed. In that way we will be able to obtain a broader idea of their overall complexity.

In view of attitude change, we will focus on narrative persuasion describing the mechanisms, instruments and components inherent to this scientific field pertaining to media psychology. As a consequence, we will approach the most recent and specific theories explaining and measuring the persuasion through narratives.

Following the same theoretical line, we will present hypothesis and research questions as well as the method explaining the design, construction and implementation of the research. In addition, we will present a statistical quantitative analysis of the obtained results.

Finally, we will present an interpretation of the data analysis from the previous chapter. The main purpose of this part will be to contrast our results to previous researches referring to the authors and their theories. This part will confirm or deny the results of our empirical research regarding the theories explained in the preliminary theoretical framework. Furthermore, we will give final conclusions identifying, and explaining limitations of mechanisms and persuasive processes involved in the cause of possible change in attitude towards gay people.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the present study is to find out, whether the exposure to the audiovisual fiction exerts effects on attitudes towards gay people of the specific Serbian culture.

In attempting to extend the findings of previous researches, the study tends to determine whether exposure to positive portrayals of gay people will be associated with attitude change resulting in decrease in overall degree of expressed homophobia.

Finally, the present study has the objective of identifying, diagnosing and analyzing factors, mechanisms and persuasive processes implying potential attitude change toward gay people in Serbia.

1.1.1 Specific objectives

The present study analyzes the effects of identification with the characters as a dependent and explanatory variable of the narrative persuasion.

Considering the identification with characters as the key mechanism underlying persuasion, we will determine which specific dimension of identification, plays the most important role in potential attitude change.

Taking into account that previous researches did not give a definite empirical corroboration on the influence of the gender on the process of identification, the study observes a potential interplay between the gender of the participant and the achieved identification with character.

By introducing other variables (e.g., Gender, Inter-contact, Religiosity and the Third person effect), the study establishes to what extent these potential moderators may increase or reduce the association between the effects of the film and homosexuality attitudes.

Finally, the study establishes the association between identification with the character and other aspects of evaluation of the film in view of overall attitude change toward persons of homosexual orientation.

Theoretical framework

2.1. Homosexuality

Given that homosexuality as well as the reception and attitudes toward gay people are very complex subjects, we approach this phenomenon by dismembering all relevant factors and concepts inherent to this subject. Firstly, explaining homosexuality and identifying theories and diverse approaches, we will tend to have greater insight to what homosexuality really is.

After explaining some past theoretical approaches, mostly based on prejudice and misconceptions (e.g., Biological approach), we take an overview on the perception of homosexuality throughout the *concept of gender* and *queer theory* achieving in that way the widest possible reflection of diverse aspects in view of present moment personified in homophobia.

2.1.1 Homosexuality as a term associated with pathology[10]

According to Hyde (1994) the initial questions about the cause of homosexuality were associated with the development of various scientific disciplines. Throughout history, people rather studied attitudes towards homosexuality, than its cause (Bijelic & Cesar, 2010). Homosexuality was less tolerated, and generally was characterized as a deviation, a sin, or a disease.

[10] To avoid confusion, we use the term “pathology” only to refer to previous theoretical approaches to homosexuality (e.g. Psychoanalytic approach, Biological approach and Behaviorist approach).

Thus, if homosexuality was wrongly perceived as a disease, it is logical to assume that every disease had a cause. This assumption from the 19th century was the main motivation for seeking the causes of homosexuality (Puhalo, 2009).

In this context, we will point out several early approaches trying to explain the phenomenon of homosexuality as a term implying pathology.

2.1.2 Psychoanalytic approach

Generally, many psychoanalysts agreed that homosexuality was a very complex phenomenon, determined by various variables and influences (Adler & Friedman, 1958; Fisher, 1973; Freud, 1905; 1920).

As some authors suggest, psychoanalysis was practically the first scientific discipline focused on exploring systematically the origins and causes of homosexual behavior (Newbigin, 2013; Rot, 2003). In that context, Freud (1920) believed that the cause of homosexuality was rooted in the early stages of life, frequently determined by traumatic events from the childhood. As a child grows up, sexuality is more directed towards "appropriate" objects (members of the opposite sex), and the desire for "inappropriate" objects decreases (members of the same sex).

Consequently, psychoanalysts saw homosexuality as a pathological condition or a perversion. Freud (1920) indicated that abnormal resolution of phallic phase conflict leads to the identification with women and to the male homosexuality. Sexual desire for the same sex dampens the desire for incest and soothes the fear of castration. For such men, women represent a mortal danger to them and often inspire a feeling of repulsion and disgust.

According to Freud (1920) the excessive attachment to the mother was responsible for the development of homosexuality in men, and the mother was also accused when she was too cold and authoritarian, repelling allegedly her child not only from herself but from the entire female gender.

It should be noted that in recent times studies showed the opposite, i.e. that the father plaid a crucial role in the development of heterosexual behaviour, and that homosexuality is not caused by an abnormal attachment of sons to their mother, but the excessive attachment to the mother is instigated by lack of contact, unreturned intimacy and trust in their father. It is interesting to note that the same studies showed that the frequency of orgasm and frigidity in women also correlated with their positive or negative attitude towards the father, and that there was no correlation with such an attitude towards the mother (Bene, 1965; Fisher, 1973).

For Adler (1958) homosexuality was a consequence of the emotional immaturity and neuroticism. According to him, inclination towards one’s own gender was an expression of lack of self-confidence and a deep psychological distance from the opposite gender. Homosexuality between two men, according to Adler (1958), was an expression of the desire to get rid of the feeling of inferiority complex towards women who were perceived as superior beings.

Fromm (1941, 1956) associated homosexuality with gender roles and sadomasochistic character formed in an authoritarian, patriarchal family. As a woman in a patriarchal society was typically weaker and less valuable, a sadist automatically hated and despised weakness as such. Consequently, his attitude towards the woman got progressively a hostile and harsh tone. In addition, due to a different socialization woman seemed to be a strange, odd and unknown world to a man causing his constant anxiety.

It could be said that Jung's (1956) theory of binary androgynism offered a new explanation and understanding of human bisexuality. According to Jung (1956) human psyche was bipolar (animus and anima) and such psychic bisexuality reflected a biological fact. Many agree that bisexuality of living beings is normal and that sexual differentiation has never been carried out fully and completely.

In recent times, Davidson and Neale, (1994), explained homosexuality as a sexual desire or activity directed toward the same gender.

In contrast to those groups that can be identified by characteristics which are visible from the outside, gay people are usually identified according to their own statements (Green, 2002).

Finally, sexual orientation is one of the components of a person's identity, and is defined as emotional, sexual and romantic attraction to another person. In most people, sexual orientation is formed at a very early age through interaction of biological, cognitive and social factors (Rot, 2002).

2.1.3 Biological approach

Despite the fact that the American Psychological Association (1973) detached homosexuality from the list of mental diseases, the scientific debate on origins and causes of homosexuality is still present within biological and medical approaches (Mustanski & Bailey, 2003).

In addition, estimates of average percentage of gay and lesbian population on a global level remained a general subject of interest (Gates, 2011; Gates & Newport, 2012; Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin 1948, 1953; Petrovic, 2013).

Unfortunately, as there are no objective methods that can be used to determine whether a person is homosexual, the estimates depend on the methods of data collection. Generally, according to Gates and Newport (2012), any kind of statistical measuring of homosexual orientation can be challenging given that this concept usually involves gender identity as a supplementary social and cultural pattern.

Nevertheless, Kinsey et al., (1948, 1953) suggested that almost 50% of men who did not marry by the age of 35, had a homosexual experience, while 25% of men had occasional same-sex experiences. On the other hand, 4% of men in their lifetime had exclusively same-sex orientation. As regards the women, only 13% of them had occasional same-sex experience, and 9% of married women sporadically maintained such relationships. Finally, only 1% of women were exclusively oriented to the same gender.

While Petrovic (2013) suggests that the percentage of persons with the homosexual orientation is by all means same nowadays as it was throughout the history, some studies specifically indicateted that in a global scale, the average percentage of gay people ranged from 3, 5% (Gates, 2011), to 17% (Gonsiorek, Sell & Weinrich, 1995).

Summing up, the studies based on biological approach refer primarily to biological influence on sexual orientation through the factors designated as genetic factors, prenatal factors, cerebral organization and hormonal imbalance.

a) *Genetic factors*

Franz Kallmann (1952) argued that there was a genetic predisposition to homosexuality. He conducted a parallel study on the genetic aspects of male homosexuality in pairs of identical and fraternal twins. He concluded that identical twins were those who coincided mostly in their sexual preference, which was caused, in his opinion, by homosexual gene. However, such gene has not been identified to this day (Gotan, 2012).

b) *Prenatal factors*

Kallmann (1952) focused on a critical period between the middle of the second and the middle of the fifth month of fetal development, during which the hypothalamus differentiates and determines sexual orientation. Any biological effect according to Kallmann (1952) could have caused homosexuality (e.g., maternal stress in pregnancy).

c) *Cerebral disposition*

One of the most interesting researches that dealt with biological foundations of human sexuality was the testing of certain neuro-anatomic differences between homosexual and heterosexual men, conducted by Simon LeVay (1991) in early 90s of the last century. Based on autopsy tissue analysis, he found that the third hypothalamus (INAH3) generally was twice as large in heterosexual men as in homosexual men and homosexual women. Although his research had many shortcomings, LeVay (1991) concluded that the basis of sexual dimorphism was not biological gender as such, but a sexual orientation as a biological substrate.

d) *Hormonal imbalance*

Some researchers (Allen & Gorski, 1990; Bishop & Wahlsten 1997) tried to determine whether the level of testosterone is different in homosexual and heterosexual men. Similarly to the studies focused on men, researches conducted on women did not provide any definite evidence that lesbians had a higher level of testosterone and lower level of estrogen than heterosexual women (Baucom, Besch & Callahan, 1985; Gartrell, Loriaux, & Chase, 1977; Petraglia, Serour & Chapron, 2013).

2.1.4 Behaviourist approach

In researches of numerous behaviourists (Barlow & Agras, 1973; Feldman & MacCulloch, 1971; Masters & Johnson, 1979; Pritt & Pritt, 1987), homosexuality was seen principally as a learned inappropriate sexual reaction. In that framework, if a person changes the course and nature of sexual involvement, their personal problem of homosexuality is expected to be solved, too.

In addition, the pioneers of behaviourism, (Skinner, 1971 et al.; Watson, 1920) often applied agonizing, harmful stimuli to restrain homosexual feedbacks. Finally, they attempted to strengthen heterosexual erotic arousal through the use of sexually explicit visual materials and surrogate sexual partners.

Thus, as we can see, the behaviorist approach emphasized the importance of learning in the development of sexual orientation. According to this approach, people are born sexual, not heterosexual or homosexual. Rewards or punishments shape the behavior of an individual to dominant homosexuality or dominant heterosexuality (Gotan, 2012).

Moreover, Moberly (1983) enhanced that the most important and the most serious problem the gay people faced, was not how to be sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex, but how to please frustrated, genuine emotional desires with those of their own sex. The stimuli, according to Moberly (1983) both positive and negative, were aimed at primarily those of the same sexual orientation.

2.1.5 Interactional theory

Psychologist Michael Storms (1978) proposed a theory of the development of sexual orientation, according to which the degree of sexual maturity in adolescence is a critical factor.

According to Storms (1978), homosexuality evolves if individuals have early matured sex drive, so that the erotic conditioning is oriented to the members of the same sex with whom they spend time. Otherwise, if the individual's sex drive occurs after the age of 15, when he/she starts a male-female friendships and associating, the individual will be heterosexual. This theory unified biological factors (maturation of sex drive) and environmental factors (learning and social interaction).

2.1.6 Sociological approach

According to Simon and Gagnon (1967), the term "homosexual" was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Just naming a person “homosexual” can affect not only how other people see him/her, but also how he/she sees himself/herself. A person begins to recognize even the slightest tendency towards homosexuality, until finally convincing himself/herself that he/she is a homosexual. Some sociologists (Piontek, 1992; Warner, 1991) pointed out that homosexuality occured more frequently in rigid, patriarchal societies.

In other words, Simon and Gagnon (1973) searched for the cause of homosexuality in a complex combination of biological and social influences.

As a support to this perspective, Bosanac (2002) considered that any person, regardless of being homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual has a unique biology, and the unique social perception of the world around him/her.

On the other hand, it is not less important that the reception of homosexuality is deeply influenced by the representation of LGBTQI persons. Summing up, we should find out how “the world” perceives homosexuality. In this regard, we will tend now to explain how homosexuality is represented in the media and what the effects of such representation are.

2.2 Media representation of LGBTQI and the media effects

The media as a significant sociological factor shaping our perceptions not only does ultimately influence the development of every individual attitude towards gay people but, it also affects, as Hammack (2005) suggests, individuals' self-perceptions.

As the media has a social and psychological instrument influence with a whole range of mechanisms, the entire modern society through individuals are exposed to the impact of the media, which we will explain how the picture that society obtain on gay people vastly depends on their actual representation.

2.2.1 Defining the concept of representation

If we understand representation as a concept and modern phenomenon tightly associated with the power of dominant social classes, it is necessary to track this concept from its origins. Starting with Gramsci's (1931, 1932, 1933) considerations of ideology in view of media representation, some theorists of cultural studies (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2005; Griffin, 2012; Lash, 2007; Lorimer, 1998, Simon, 2003; Procter, 2004) bring the concept of ideology to the fore saying that the effect of ideology lies in the fact that dominant groups tend to maintain the existing situation. The dominance of the powerful over the weak, presents versions of social reality by which the process of domination is natural. In short, the natural system of values is the situation as it is, and should be.

Also, according to Barker (2000), the ideology is a map of meaning that, while apparently is intended to be a universal truth (p. 27).

Therefore, the question is how to associate the dominant ideology and media representation of LGBTQI. Perhaps, we should take into consideration the fact that according to Kellner (2004), the dominant perceptions on gender identity as socially constructed categories are directly related to the media, because the process of presenting and constructing the identity represents the basis of the media itself and media ideology (p. 434). The representation as a concept is actually a set of different phenomena, combining in its approach various disciplines such as sociology, social theory, political economy, literary theory, media studies, cultural anthropology, and philosophy (Hall, 1980).

According to Hall (1994), who was the first to give a whole new meaning to the concept of representation: “The essence of representation consists in building connections between the concepts and the signs, whose aim is to use language to say something meaningful about the world, or to present the world in a meaningful way to other people” (p. 15).

Furthermore, Briggs and Cobley (2002, p. 307) remind us that it was previously thought that the mass media gave completely authentic representation of the reality (the concept of media objectivity) and that the result of such authenticity, especially through television broadcast, is the trust of the audience in the media. The audience really believes that representation is always a reflection of the reality, and such belief precisely rests on the delusion of reality. The representation indicates an active process of selecting, broadcasting, structuring and shaping: not just to transmit the existing meaning, but also to make that the things get the meaning (Briggs & Cobley, 2002, p. 307). That is why it is impossible to have only one interpretation of some events from the reality. The meaning of an event does not exist outside representation. An event gets its meaning through the way in which it is represented.

Thus, the meaning of an event actually can't exist before the process of representation is initiated. The reality does not exist as an ultimate category before and independently from the human activity of its denotation. Since such denotation occurs in communication, the mass media actually participate in the creation of the meaning (Milivojevic, 2009).

What's more, Van Zoonen (2001) asserts that the easiest way to control the media is by energy; the media have become an important instrument for hierarchical homogenization of the regime. The media are in line with the ruling ideology - they support it. Although they are defined as means of information, their function has evolved into re-interpretative, and their originally conceived enlightening character has been replaced by mechanisms of manipulation that maintain order and meet the requirements of the market.

A careful and selective use of media forms, structure of power, can also create desirable models of gender roles and identities. The media are like a drive for social technologies of gender that represent central places in which discursive negotiation on gender occur (Van Zoonen, 2001, p. 49).

The possibility of representing many aspects of reality necessarily gives rise to the establishment of relations of power in the distribution of social powers. In that scope, Edgar & Sedgwick (2005) argue that subordinate groups actively resist and respond to political and economic domination. In their opinion, the subordinate groups need not to be seen merely as the passive fools of the dominant class and its ideology (p.165).

According to Simeunovic (2009) representation is an attempt of the dominant class or group to make the meanings that fit their interests, and is acceptable to society as a whole (p. 17).

Furthermore, Procter (2004) believes that the traditional concept of a passive audience in which powerful media literally injects the contents is rejected, recognizing the possibility that the audience can decode every message in a different way than the author uploaded.

As we can notice and conclude, the culture cannot be an ideologically pure space; there is a constant struggle over the meaning among different groups and discourses. The production of meaning and representation is not a closed system, and for a message to have some effect, it must first be meaningfully decoded by the audience. This means that the audience actively participates in the discursive process of meaning-making within the media content.

2.2.2 Audiovisual media representation of homosexuality

Recognizing the importance of the media, Calzo and Ward (2009), identify multiple factors contributing to process of representation. One of the most significant among all these factors are likely to be the media, which adolescents commonly name as a prime source of sexual information (Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005; Detenber, Ho, Neo, Malik & Cenite, 2013; Ward, 2003). It is also sustained that media representation may be especially powerful in this domain (Calzo & Ward, 2009), and may be a principal source of information for the 40% of young people who claim not to know a gay person personally (Gross, 1991).

Representation, as it has been suggested before, is not just how the media represent the world, but also what kind of identity, cultural values and social relations they establish, or what systems, realities they accept and reject. Apparently, one of the dominant perceptions of sexuality is deeply marked by *heteronormativity*[11]. By watching television, children in their

[11]According to Herek (2004, p.16.), normative heterosexuality or heteronormativity lies at the heart of heterosexism, and is defined as the antagonism between heterosexuality and homosexuality. The term heteronormativity summarizes queer theory's evaluation and analysis of the cultural dichotomy that determines social relations entirely in terms of heterosexuality-homosexuality.

earlier days face the dominant system of heteronormative values prescribed by the society where they grow up. At the same time, they meet first generalizations, stereotypes and prejudices (Kalinic, 2014).

Heteronormativity as a standard according to Pharr (1988) is white, young, heterosexual male who has access to education, employment, health care, etc. It is important to note that the standard does not necessarily reflect a majority, at least not in figures, but it represents those who have the capacity to use power and to control the others (p. 53).

In addition, Halberstam (2005) affirms that contemporary television supports and consolidates heteronormativity in representation of gay characters following well-established patterns based on binary nature of sex gender and sexuality.

Consequently, some studies **(**Baunach, 2011; Golom & Mohr, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Turcilo, 2012; Wright & Bae, 2013) strongly suggest that not only do the media reinforce views of dominant heterosexual classes toward certain minority vulnerable groups, but it certainly also empowers social heteronormativity established and framed by social institutions such as law, educational and religious structures, gender, or political orientation, (Detenber et al., 2013). Heteronormativity as a standard unambiguously correlates with Herek's (1992) previous perception that “the media serve as an institutional bridge between cultural heterosexism and the psychological heterosexism of an individual” (p. 56).

In that sense, according to Lewis and Gosset (2008), education is one of the key factors responsible for the level of acceptance of LBTQI persons. For Smith (2011), educational level, level of economic development and religiousness are the three most important factors that explain much of the acceptance of gay people. Countries with the highest level of support commonly have high levels of general development (e.g., higher per capital incomes and advanced levels of education). Developing countries and more religious countries express less approval (p.11).

As a support, Detenber et al., (2013), argues that younger people with a higher level of culture and education are more likely to have positive and encouraging attitudes toward homosexuality. They are more tolerant, since the process of education enables individuals to be exposed to various perceptions, which ultimately encourages individuals to adopt social tolerance as a model of their everyday life.

Taking the heteronormativity as a fact, wide-ranging studies have been done illustrating the role of the media in representation of homosexuality (Calzo & Ward, 2009; Detenber, et al., 2013; Herek, 1992, 1993; Golom & Mohr, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Montgomery, 1989; Robert & Lichter, 1988; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014).

Recognizing the influence that the media have on individuals, the representation of LGBTQI people in the media became decisive in understanding an individual's attitudes toward this minority group, Levina, et al., (2000) argue that gay people constitute certainly one of the most invisible groups in society.

In this regard, Platero Méndez and Gómez Ceto (2008) remind that invisibility of sexual diversity and the presumption of heterosexuality are signs of a deep-rooted discrimination, and the sources of bullying situations to which no proper attention is paid.

Moreover, Dawson (2015) indicates that particularily during the Second World War, queer characters were commonly represented as anti-social, criminal or mentally sick. Hypothetically, this could be a consequence of the fact that homosexuality is commonly perceived as a constant threat to overall modern society, given that the media desire an environment in which every person is expected to be heterosexual.

Following the same theoretical line (Becker 1998; D'Acci, 2004; Gross, 1991) affirm in their respective researches that so much films as TV programs constantly represent mostly heterosexual characters, and the love between heterosexual couples is represented as the only socially accepted romantic scenario.

When a homosexual couple is represented on a film or even more on television, they are frequently the subject of jokes and stereotype. According to Calzo and Ward (2009), the most common way "in which homosexuality is portrayed on television is through a gay male character that is very showy and colorful, sexually violent and funny mainly because they comprise all of the stereotypes that people have about homosexuality" (p. 26).

In few uncommon situations when the gay people are not portrayed as a general threat, their sexual intercourse is still never depicted explicitly as an act of socially acceptable love (Moore, 2007; Sender, 2004). As Levina et al., (2000) note, while heterosexual couples are frequently shown openly making love, the gay characters are not allowed even to touch intimately each other. Another way that according to Kennedy (1994) homosexuality is represented on screen is through, soap operas, melodramas soft news and talk shows that typically convey a very inaccurate, if not sensationalized, representation of gay life to the heterosexual viewer.

Furthermore, some qualitative analyses (Hart, 2000; Herman, 2005), specify that although recent representations not so often show gay and lesbian characters as socially undesirable, a vast majority of audiovisual fictions continue to persist in stereotypical portrayal of gay people (Hart, 2000). As opposed to gay men, Platero Méndez (2009) notes that lesbians are discriminated both as women and as homosexuals.

In rare occasions when they are represented, these stigmatized characters are still likely to be notoriously immoral or infected with HIV such as the case in *Philadelphia*[12] (1995).

Even broadly popular TV comedies representing amusing gay and lesbian characters such as *Ellen*[13] (ABC Network, 1994-1998) and *Will & Grace*[14] (NBC, 1998-2006), usually give subtle and unwanted support to existing stereotypes by portraying gay people as unsatisfied, sexually frustrated and ridiculous persons (Cooper, 2003; Fouts & Inch, 2005; Herman, 2005).

In view of the successful sitcom, *Queer Eye for the Straight Gu*y[15] (Bravo, 2003-2007), Hart (2004) acknowledges that the success of this comedy should be sought in “the fact that the makeover team continuously pokes fun at the gay stereotypes they represent. Their use of humor may expose the absurdity of gay stereotypes, revealing that gay men are not a threat to straight men or women, and that rigid adherence to traditional gender roles may actually be detrimental to the well being of the makeover targets” (p. 6).

Although Calzo and Ward (2009) affirm that despite certain changes, representation of homosexuality remains deeply marked by simplified stereotypes, Grujic (2013) argues that a cinematographic production created after the nineties is much more diversified and positive toward homosexual characters. In that context, creations such as *Queer as Folk*[16] (2000-2005) or *Brokeback Mountain*[17] (2005), symbolize changes in the perception of Hollywood with regard to

[12] Demme, J. (Producer), & Demme, J. (Director). (1993).

[13] Black.C., & Rosenthal. D. S. (Writers), Black.C., Marlens.N. & Rosenthal.D.S. (Directors). (1994-1998).

[14] Kohan, D. & Mutchnick, M. (Writers), & Burrows, J. (Director). (1998-2006).

[15] Collins, D. & Metzler, D. (Writers), & Collins, D. & Metzler, D. (Directors). (2003-2007).

[16] Cowen, R. & Lipman, D. (Writers). (2000-2005).

[17] Schamus, J., McMurtry, L. & Ossana, D. (Producers), Lee, A. (Director). (2005).

representation of homosexuality, because they offer more layers within the contextualization of LGBTQI life. This kind of multidimensional representation, according to Grujic (2013) goes far beyond the simple question: “whether the gay is Ok or not” and opens other dilemmas such as “autohomophobia, hatred, violence, loneliness, degradation, destroyed family life, transsexuality, and self marginalization” (p. 2).

Similarly, Chambers (2006) perceives this recent tendency as a point toward potential improvements in diversity and the positive nature of sexual minorities’ portrayals.

Finally, Shah et al., (2005) affirm that mediated exposure to positive representation of homosexuality can lead to better public dialogue on social issues. With greater openness, more information on homosexuality can be presented to the public. At the same time, a diversity of viewpoints that may be presented will result in greater openness about a previously taboo topic, and is likely to lead to positive changes in representation (Shah et al., 2005). Finally, if such an influence does exist, Kalinic (2014) indicates that “it is understandable that minority and special interest groups would turn to the media as a pathway to representation and attention” (p.36).

2.2.3 Representation of homosexuality in Serbian cinematography

During the second part of 20th century, in the cinematography of Serbia, the subject of homosexuality used to be represented very rarely and read mostly between the lines. Actually, as some studies suggest, the representation of homosexuality in Serbian society was just a reflection of a dominant communistic public discourse (Dawson, 2015; Jovanovic, 2009; Moss, 2006; Petrovic, 2013; Simic, 2008).

This practice, as described in a documentary film *The Celluloid Closet*[18] (1995), was also characteristic to much larger and more democratic cinemas, such as Hollywood. As Moss (2006) points out, this documentary gives an extensive description of the fact that gay characters who were not so lucky to finish in a low budget comedy, regularly ended up in all kinds of tragic episodes, marked by their own propensity to curse that could only be solved by death. Following that line, we should recall the fact, as Grujic (2013) reveals, that gay people represented in the Serbian films during the 90’s served almost exclusively as victims of local gangsters and criminals. This kind of portrayal is particularily evident in films such as *Wheels*[19] (1999) and *Down to the bone*[20] (1997).

Although in even more repressive systems homosexuality could find their filmic reflections, Petrovic (2013) argues that none of these films offered sufficiently complex insight into the subject, given that they too often reproduced banal stereotypes typical for the genre of comedy.

After the war and the breakup of Yugoslavia (1990-1995), in line with the aspirations of the new human rights initiatives, in the former Yugoslav republics something that had used to be a taboo subject gradually started to find its materialized reflections. Jovanovic (2009) suggests that one of the reasons for the sudden opening of the Serbian society to this subject certainly lies in the post-war LGBTQI activism and their initiatives to articulate political demands of LGBTQI community.

As a result of the efforts to place homosexual couples in the center of a narrative plot, we might distinguish three films of the Serbian mainstream cinema that treat the homosexuality as

[18] Epstein, R. & Friedman, J. (Producers) & Epstein, R. & Friedman, J. (Directors). (1995).

[19] Samardzic, LJ. (Producer), & Milosavljevic, D. (Director). (1999).

[20] Maljevic, B. (Producer), & Skerlic, S. (Director). (1997).

an important agent of sexual socialization. According to Simic (2008, p. 421), the films such as *Fine Dead Girls*[21] (2002), *Take a Deep Breath*[22] (2004) and *Go West*[23] (2005), introduce Ex Yugoslav cinema into the direct and unequivocal opening to explicit representation of homosexuality.

Despite the fact that these three films will be remembered as pioneers of Serbian cinematography in view of new tendencies in representing LBTQI, essentially, homosexuality as a subject was not depicted in a more substantial way than it was the case with the mainstream media. These films actually as some researches indicate, exploit peculiarity of the scandalous theme just in order to attract the audience, while the true representation of homosexuality remains a mere metaphor (Grujic, 2013; Moss, 2006; Simic, 2008).

Although, in all the three films the center of the action is gay couples, the real objective of this kind of representation, according to Jovanovic (2009, p. 27) is to free the homosexuality from pathologization. This is all somewhat understandable because sexual identity implies the existence of the whole community, the whole system, including the political system, under which LBTQI people should have their defined or at least a reserved place.

Furthermore, the homosexuality as a sexual orientation is in such a way associated with the experience of trauma that even a fake “return” to heterosexuality turns out to be most logical, and the most natural option in the context of the struggle for social survival (Simic, 2008, p. 424).

In addition, a significant communality of all these three films is an underlying escapism. While in *Fine Dead Girls* (2002), the possibility to escape is reduced to a few of imagined

[21] Patljak, J. (Producer), & Matanic, D. (Director). (2002).

[22] Marinkovic, D. (Producer), & Marinkovic, D. (Director). (2004).

[23] Smajic, S. (Producer), & Imamovic, A. (Director). (2005).

sequences in a form of a dream, *Take a Deep Breath* (2004) and *Go West* (2005), explicitly refer to going to a better place somewhere in the West.

Finally, *The Parade*[24] (2011), although not the first film to tackle explicitly the subject of homosexuality, is according to Grujic (2013), actually the only one in which the gay characters appear in a truly developed form without any schematic or stereotypical representation. What's more, in contrast to others, this is the only Serbian film where the gay characters appear freely in the center of the gay love story as a couple confident in their love (Petrovic, 2013, p. 24).

Summing up, Grujic (2013) concludes that *The Parade* (2011) is neither a film made for the LGBTQI population, nor it represents their voice, but a film for heterosexual majority who do not often see gays and lesbians on Serbian film. In other words, the objective of this film is to make heterosexual majority to take pity over the sufferings of a tragic gay couple.

2.2.4 Effects of exposure to audiovisual media and attitudes toward homosexuality

As a final and perhaps the vital question is the dilemma whether the exposure to the media effects and influences our attitudes toward homosexuality, and if they really do, what are the effects? The answer unfortunately is not always simple and affirmative in spite of the fact that media representation, thanks to the specificity of its forms, themes, approaches and capacities to build narrative fiction, by definition, is constantly reviewing and exceeding the limits of the reality (Yaszek, 2010).

Narrative fiction also makes its audience more open and more perceptive for reconsideration of the existing social norms and of its basic postulations. Given the possibilities that the film and Television as channels of representation can offer, some studies suggest that so much self perception as well as self esteem of LGBTQI members can be achieved through the

[24] Anastasov, V. (Producer), & Dragojevic, S. (Director). (2011).

mediating role of media effects (Basow & Howe, 1980; Boon and Lomore, 2001; Hammack, 2005; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004; Lockwood, 2006; Ochman, 1996; Wohlford, Barry & Lockman, 2004).

In that sense, gender or race as predictors, indicating that people are more influenced by models of the same gender or race, are found in several studies (Baunach, 2011; Dobinson & Young, 2003; Giuliano, Turner, Lundquist & Knight, 2007; Lewis & Gossett, 2008; Lockwood, 2006; Mathews, 2003).

Supporting the demographic approach some recent studies suggest that Whites adolescents are more likely to be influenced by media sexually oriented messages than Afro-Americans, because Afro-Americans for some unknown reason seem to relay more in interpersonal communication about sex than whites (Sutton, Brown, Wilson, & Klein, 2002; Wright, 2009).

Additionally, in accordance with Hennessy's (2009) and Brown's (2006) studies, Calzo and Ward (2009a) find a larger number of positive correlations between exposure to mainstream media (e.g., prime-time sitcoms, dramas, popular magazines) and positive homosexuality attitudes.

Furthermore various studies indicate that people regardless of their gender exposed to narrative fiction where gay people are represented in a positive manner, express more positive evaluations of homosexuality (Barry & Lockman, 2004; Bonds-Raacke, Cady, Schlegel, Harris & Firebaugh, 2007; Schiappa, 2005; Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2011; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014; Wright & Bae, 2013).

Chronologically observed, in an empirical research conducted by Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald (2000) the results suggest that audiovisual fiction do affect viewer’s attitudes toward gay people. The students who viewed an anti-gay video expressed significantly more negative attitudes than the students who viewed a video with positive depiction of gay people.

In other research made by Rössler and Brosius, (2001), students participating in a mediated debates on homosexuality, expressed afterward more accepting attitudes toward gay people than the students who did not take part in the experiment.

Mazur and Emmers-Sommers (2002) find similar results in their study, in which, watching a film about a nontraditional family with homosexual characters resulted in greater acceptance of homosexuality.

Interested in reducing prejudices toward gay man through TV programs, and believing that television viewers establish a special parasocial relationship with fictional characters, Schiappa (2005) focused on the role of television in anti-gay prejudice reduction. Arguing that exposure to positive representation of minority groups in the media can educate viewers how to interact with minority members in a positive manner, Schiappa (2005) found evidences that television gay characters represented as morally virtuous, contributed in reducing negative prejudices toward gay men.

Using students as participants to confirm their parasocial contact hypothesis, Schiappa, Hewes and Gregg (2006) also reveal a positive correlation between exposure to the media representing gay people and reduction of homophobia.

Similarly, Bonds-Raacke and her colleagues (2007) verify that an affirmative and positive media representation of homosexual characters generate a more positive attitude toward gay people than portraying a morally negative character.

Following the same line, other recent studies (Raney, 2006; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014) suggest that regardless of the sexual orientation of the audience, and despite the homosexual orientation of the lesbian characters, the audience tend to evaluate in a positive way morally superior characters, rather for their moral values than for their sexual orientation. In addition, by observing reception processes of lesbian characters, Soto-Sanfiel et al., (2014) indicate that identification with lesbian morally virtuous protagonist is achieved correspondingly in heterosexual and homosexual audiences.

Furthermore, the study of Gomillion and Giuliano, (2011) found evidence that the media influences self-realization of LGBTQI people, their “coming out”, and existing identities by providing role models and inspiration.

On the other hand, some researchers suggest the importance of similarity with a role model as predictor of influence on self-perception of LBTQI people (Basow & Howe, 1980; Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004; Lockwood, 2006; Ochman, 1996; Wohlford, Barry & Lockman, 2004).

Nevertheless, some researchers, intending to put aside mainstream media, focus more on pornographic and homoerotic contents with explicit sexual acts, and their social influence on the viewer's attitudes (Wright & Bae 2013; Mundorf, Allen, D’Alessio & Emmers-Sommer, 2007; Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis & Vilato, 2000; Wright et al., 2012).

In addition, a panel study developed by Wright and Bae (2013) on pornographic contents and its influence on the consumers reception, confirm that homosexuality attitudes are directly related to pornographic consumption.

In that sense, Wright and Bae (2013) in their research primarily focus on exploring longitudinal associations between adult U.S. women’s and men’s pornography consumption and the manner it influences the reception of homosexuality.

As a support, Ibiti (2015) indicates that moral judgment involves "a personal effort of moral distinction, morality and responsibility to cultivate moral reasoning" (p.102). On the other hand, psychology based on moral judgment seeks to integrate and evaluate the theoretical and empirical traditions of morality. In other words, Ibiti (2015) suggests that moral psychology focuses on human behaviour in moral contexts. The results of moral actions and its implications are related to responsibility of moral judgment.

Thus, assessing whether pornography consumption is associated with moral judgment of homosexuality in addition to support for same-sex marriage is of functional importance.

Wright and Bae's (2013) fundamental aim was to assess both moral judgments related to homosexual sex and attitudes toward legislative policy for gay people such as legal recognition of homosexual marriage as vitally important for applied and theoretical reasons.

According to Wright and Bae (2013), individuals may morally judge negatively gay people but on the other hand, they support the idea that governmental codes should ignore a homosexual orientation. Paul (2011) predicts this possibility, and defines it as "tolerant intolerance" (p. 8).

Supporting this theoretical position Wright and Randall (2013) agree that attitudes toward homosexual relations and their legal status are, fundamentally, attitudes marked within purely sexual context. They also suggest that "pornography activates a liberal sexual script that encourages non judgment toward and even approval of nontraditional sexual behavior" (p. 15). In that sense they also state basing on their previous empirical results (Wright, 2013a) that by experiencing pornographic contents viewers develop their sexual scripts tolerant toward homosexual behaviour.

At the point of application, according to Wright and Bae (2013), the two groups should differ. Moral absolutists “should be more likely to reject pornography’s nontraditional sexual scripts, whereas moral individualists should be more expected to accept pornography’s nontraditional sexual scripts” (p. 494). In summary, attitude change influenced by exposure to homosexual pornography should be more visible among moral individualists than absolutists.

As a synthesis of this alternative point of view, it is to conclude that viewer's exposure to pornographic contents with explicit homosexual intercourse, should lead to the activation of sexual scripts that is encouraging toward homosexual sexual behaviour for both moral individualists and moral absolutists.

Moreover, in consistency with earlier studies (Brown, 2006; Hennessy, 2009), Wright and Bae (2013) establish that the correlation between exposure to pornography and positive attitudes toward homosexuality is significantly influenced and determined by ethnic background.

In that context, Wright and Bae (2013) include that “the pornography consumption is a stronger predictor of positive homosexuality attitudes for Whites than for Afro-Americans” (p. 505).

Furthermore, in light of homoerotic films in mainstream media and its ability to change attitudes of individuals exposed to them, Golom and Mohr (2011) addressed this aspect, and examined the effects of explicit pornography contents on heterosexuals’ attitudes.

From this perspective, according to Golom and Mohr (2011) men are more likely than women to perceive homosexual pornographic materials as a personal threat and are more likely to to have stronger negative reactions about it.

Taken together, the results of Golom and Mohr (2011) suggest that pornography with explicit homosexual contents can have unexpected and sometimes conflicting effects on heterosexuals' attitudes and prejudices towards gay people. Specifically, "sexually anxious heterosexual men differed from other participants in that they viewed gay men more positively after watching male–male erotic content, whereas low anxiety men and high anxiety women viewed gay men more negatively after exposure to the male–male video clips" (p. 9).

Although these findings suggest that directed exposure to homosexual characters appears to affect viewers' attitudes, to date no studies have documented whether everyday media exposure is associated with attitudes toward homosexuality. Drawing from cultivation theory, it is expected that frequent, regular media consumption would lead viewers to cultivate beliefs about homosexuality that coincide with those portrayed in the media. If negative stereotypes dominate in the media consumed, regular exposure could make people less accepting, leading them to accept those unfavourable portrayals (Gross, 1991). However, as media content concerning homosexuality becomes more positive and diverse, it is possible that such shifts may be associated with greater attitudes of acceptance towards homosexuality.

Finally, as a logical extension of representation of homosexuality and its effects, we should inevitably refer to the *concept of gender* and *Queer theory* just in order to get a step forward to the question, whether the people are born or become men or women. Does the sex end gender always coincide? What is a possible difference between the sex and gender?

2.3 Concept of gender

The discussion on the concept of gender has been introduced into the feminist literature by the famous quote of Simone de Beauvoir (1949): "One is not born woman, but becomes one" (p.1).

According to modern interpretations (Geary, 2010; Halperin, 2012; Lippa, 2005; Mealey, 2000; Prince, 2005), the category *sex* refers to something given, an unchanging natural property, while *gender* refers to socio-cultural aspects. Given that the category *gender* does not depend on the given and fixed attributes, Beauvoir (1949) rather perceives the nature of *gender* as a construct related to sociological perspective of human being.

Despite the fact that the terms *sex* and *gender* in everyday language are used synonymously, there are still some differences between them. The sociological literature insists on the differences more than the psychological literature. First of all, sex is one of the main features of the man, which primarily refers to the biological differences between women and men, as well as the genetic and endocrine characteristics of men and women (Johnson, 2011).

More specifically, the notion *sex* actually represents anatomical differences between men and women, while *gender* refers to some culturally defined differences. Gender is not a conceptual or cultural continuation of biological sex, but is a discursive practice that is structured around the concept of heterosexuality as a model for human relations (Tomic-Kolundrovic & Loncaric, 2006).

Gender thus, refers to the social shaping of biological sex, which is defined by a particular understanding of the tasks, activities and roles ascribed to men and women in the society, in public and private life. Gender is actually a culturally specific definition of women and men and is variable in time and space. In addition, gender is also a socially constructed definition of relationships between women and men (Lithander, 2000). In other words, gender has a broader definition than sex, because sex includes only biological characteristics of women and men (Jugovic, 2004).

Finally, gender roles can refer to a wide range of characteristics, starting from attitudes and behaviour, up to the personality traits associated with gender. From the perspective of personality psychology, gender roles are manifested in the psychological characteristics of femininity and masculinity (Deaux & Lafrance, 1998), and from the perspective of social psychology, gender roles refer to normative expectations about the division of labour between men and women, as well as to the rules of interaction between them within a particular cultural and historical context (Spence, Deaux & Helmreich, 1985). Gender roles may be specified as a set of expectations about the behaviour of women and men (Popadic, 2009).

2.3.1 Development of Sex and Gender distinction

Researches on sex and gender in psychology began in the late nineteenth century, when the differences between men and women were generally considered. At that time, the central idea was that men were superior in intellectual ability to women, and that intellectual abilities depending on biological characteristics and anatomy of the brain affect social achievements (Ashmore et al., 1986). It is interesting that the division of labour, which resulted in superiority of men to women in power and social influence, in the scientific community was not considered problematic, but biologically inevitable (Spence, Deaux & Helmreich, 1985).

In addition, Spence, Deaux and Helmreich, (1985), have pointed to the fact that the differences in behaviour reflect average values calculated for each sex and that we should bear in mind that many women and men have similar expression of measured characteristics. It also turned out that men and women had a wide range of different types of behaviour, most of which were learned, not biologically predetermined.

As it has been suggested before, starting from the mid-thirties of the twentieth century, until the mid-sixties, femininity and masculinity were studied as two opposite and general personality traits. It was considered that femininity was normal and only natural in women, but not in men. Likewise, masculinity was natural for men, not for women (Jugovic, 2004). However, in 1974 Sandra Bem (1974) introduces the concept of *androgyny*, which is seen as a combination of masculinity and femininity, arguing that androgynous persons are better adapted because they can respond with a wider range of behaviour to the demands of diverse situations. The concept of androgyny was radical in comparison to previous understandings of sex and gender, because it was in line with a feminist social and intellectual criticism of the time (Jugovic, 2004).

The concept of androgyny had been intensively studied since the mid-fifties to mid-sixties of twentieth century, when the researchers tried to find an answer to the question of how boys and girls became adult men and women. Explanations were found in the identification of the same-sex parent, as well as in the roles that children adopted by learning (Ashmore, 1991). Since the eighties of the twentieth century, sex and gender had begun to be studied as social categories. The principal hypothesis of Bem's approach (1974) is that society has a profound effect on shaping the judgments, feelings and behaviours of men and women (Ashmore, 1991).

According to Spence et al., (1985), the concept of *androgyny* derives from the feminist movement, launched in the late sixties of the twentieth century, which focuses the attention of the society on the status of women, as well as on the impact of cultural and historical context on shaping gender roles.

Apart of the status of women in a modern society, one of the crucial questions is how to associate gender with the sexual identity of an individual.

2.3.2 Gender and sexual identity

Gender is an important dimension of the identity of a human being, perhaps the most important, because many life options of an individual depend on his/her self-containment within sex limits (more specifically, these limits define the access to rights, resources and opportunities). Gender identity as Geary (2009) notes, is originated, as well as its other aspects in the interaction between the organism, individual consciousness and social structure.

Gender is socially created and reproduced in countless everyday actions, and some sociologists (Daly & Wilson, 1983) associate it with socially constructed notions of femininity and masculinity. It obviously also includes social, psychological and cultural differences between men and women.

Thus, Giddens (2003) understands the concept of gender as the social construction of sexual identities. Furthermore, the social differences between men and women also include sexual differences. Gender is according to Giddens (2003), based on the roles and relationships, expectations and lessons learned through the approval of social structures and cultural norms: it is a whole system of roles and relationships between the sexes, determined by political, economic, social and cultural context.

Numerous researches (Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkrantz, 1970, 1972; Carlson, 2010; Deaux, 1976; Halpern, 2012; Weitz, 1977) argue that there is a wide agreement on those characteristics that distinguish "normal" men and women, regardless of age, sex, religion, education level, or marital status. According to this classification, the men are expected to develop specific masculine characteristics such as aggression, ambition, physical strength, spirit of competition, rationality, success, dominance, self-confidence, ability to take risks, courage and fighting spirit to make successfully performed their traditional sex roles.

On the other hand, also for the same purpose, women are expected to develop women's specific personality traits, which primarily include the ability to love, empathize, to meet the needs of others, especially their children, to take care of the house and all family members, to be emotional, gentle, loyal, submissive, unspoiled, helpful and obedient (Halpern, 2012).

According to some researchers (Hetherington & Park, 1986; Ladd & Lesieur, 1995; Putallaz & Heflin, 1990; Rogers, 1977), the sexual stratification begins from the earliest childhood, when female babies are being dressed in pink and male babies in blue. Different social impacts, such as, primarily, the family, age-mates, teachers, friends, television with various influential people, films and children's books, play a crucial role in the sexual classification. It is almost a rule to buy appropriate toys to children, that is, rifles and pistols to the boys and dolls to the girls. In this sense, boys and girls develop substantially different interests in accordance with the existing stereotypes about sexual roles and distinctions (Carlson, 2010; Ladd & Lesieur, 1995).

A study of Zeldow (1976) shows that both men and women, who manifest preference for the opposite sex roles, are usually considered by psychiatrists as persons with very serious psycho-pathological symptoms. According to this author, passive, shy, dependent, sexually timid, gentle and emotional men, who are at the same time very focused towards their family, children and maintaining the household, as well as aggressive, ambitious, rational, dominant, sexually confident women, the psychiatrists often see them as persons who have very serious psychopathological and deviant traits (Zeldow, 1976).

It is interesting to point out that society constantly encourages, accepts and instigates a competitive and aggressive male behaviour, being at the same time such behaviour in women suppressed and punished. Men are taught to be ashamed of their sensitivity and to suppress their emotions because those are considered feminine traits. A womanly man gives rise to mocking; he is publicly humiliated, the environment usually manifests intolerance and many other forms of repression towards him (Mills, 2011).

According to numerous stereotypes and prejudices, most gay people carry out home "feminine" tasks and can be identified by the fact that they are feminized and mainly engaged in female occupations. It could be concluded that negative attitudes towards homosexuality result from the social need to maintain a clear distinction between male and female identity, i.e. male and female sex roles. Those who advocate for gender equality have more positive attitudes toward homosexuality (Bancroft, 1983). It is known that in a patriarchal society, women's traits as well as women's work are less respected, so it is normal to expect that in a patriarchal ideology a man who shows such traits will be degraded and humiliated, because they dishonor the entire male gender by such a feminized appearance and behaviour (Mills, 2011).

In conclusion, the process of deconstruction of gender and sex logically led to the consideration of sexuality, as a category inherent to both, gender and sex. Along these lines, the feminist theory is a kind of introduction to the appearance of gay and lesbian theory, that consequently guide us to the queer theory as the most recent articulation of gender and sexual identity.

2.4 Queer Theory

2.4.1 Defining *queer* as a term

The meaning of the term *queer* has been changed several times; so it initially stood for something odd, unusual, eccentric, and later began to refer to those who have non-traditional gender and sexual behaviour in derogatory and homophobic terms, as an antonym of hetero-normativity (*Queer*, English Oxford Dictionary, 2014). In the late 80's and early 90's of the 20th century the re-appropriation and re-evaluation of the term occurred, just by those previously marginalized and discriminated by the previous meaning in order to use it as a subversive and affirmative potential, both in theoretical and in practical activist efforts (Todorovic, 2011).

Consequently, *queer* has become at least ambiguous, and most often represents an umbrella term for all those who define themselves outside the exclusivity of heterosexuality, and specifically for those who refuse to identify themselves by any gender and/or sexual identity. By this ambiguity, homophobic connotations from the meaning of *queer* are eliminated and replaced with a coherent socio-political theory that has largely reshaped consideration of gender and sexuality (Queer Nation, 1990).

In an exhaustive overview focused on depictions of gay people in European queer films, Dawson (2015) points out that “the term queer is not used only as an adjective or a noun, but also a verb: to queer can mean to read against the grain” (p.185).

According to Dawson (2015), *queer* generally implies being more critical and subversive in reading and discussing judgments of other authors.

Precisely this inherent and quite necessary ambiguity about the definition shifts the focus to what the queer theory does, how and why, rather than what it is.

Michael Warner (1993) in his introduction to a collection of texts *Fear of a queer planet: queer politics and social theory*, states that: "Queer represents, among other things, an aggressive impulse of generalization; it refuses minority logic of tolerance or simple representation of political interest in favour of more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal” (p.65).

Similarly to Warner, Halperin (1995) argues that: "unlike the gay identity which, although proclaimed as an act of affirmation, is rooted in the positive fact of homosexual choice of object, queer identity need not to be based on any positive truth or a stable reality" (p.67).

Thus, we can conclude that the word *queer* itself does not designate a natural type or a particular object. The meaning of *queer* derives from its opposition to dominant heterosexual norms. As it has been suggested before, *queer* might be anything that is inconsistent with the normal, the legitimate, and the dominant.

2.4.2 Theoretical grounds of Queer Theory

As a consequence, queer theory is a relatively new speculative field usually located, in disciplinary terms, along the lines of the theories of sexuality and gender in the broader sense, and gay and lesbian theories in the strict sense (Eng, Halberstam & Munoz. 2005). In the evolutionary-historical sense, it represents their relatively continuous newest version. The central focus in the work of many researchers (Butler, 1990, 1991, 2004; Jagose, 1996; Turner, 2000) in the frame of the queer theory is the identity. Basically, queer theory tends to achieve re-evaluation of fixed, monolithic character of sexual identity, as it was traditionally thought in the framework of modernism.

What's more the queer theory according to Jovanovic (2009) is "a set of ideas, thoughts, and productions (text, artwork, etc.) that aims to question all those facts that our culture takes for granted, normal or even natural" (p.34).

In this sense, queer theory finds its source in the attempts to deconstruct both gender and sexuality. More specifically, it turned out that the previous rigid concepts of gender and sexuality were not able to accommodate all sexual and gender varieties that escape dualism of binary opposition personified in heterosexual/homosexual, male/female categories (Duhacek, 2011, p.8).

In other words, by referring fundamentally to the imbalance between genders, sexes and desire, queer enhances the impossibility of coexistence between traditional sexuality and traditional conceptions of gender.

Therefore, queer theory from the perspective of Butler (1990, 2004) is premised on questioning of everything that can be defined as compulsory heterosexuality. Butler's approach is based on assumption that everything that we consider natural, and therefore immutable, is merely a socio-cultural construction. Generally, Butler (1990, 1991, 2004) wants to analyze and question all the previous theoretical models that neglected essentiality of the categories such as gender and sexuality.

In that context, Simic (2009, p.183) specifies that “queer theory rebels against stability, against being defined and therefore put in a box, and against the traditional gender division, since all those have been molded by societies and, as a result, exist only on a level of discourse”.

Although the queer theory is commonly associated with the gay and lesbian issues, it has a much broader scope and potential for criticism of the identity. Questioning the genuineness of any category, queer theory also includes various manifestations of gender and sexuality such as transgenderism, transvestitism, intersexuality, sadomasochism and bisexuality (Butler, 2004; Duhacek, 2011; Jagose, 1996).

Finally, summarizing pertinent literature (Butler, 1990, 1991, 2004; Dawson, 2015; Duhacek, 2011; Jagose, 1996; Jovanovic, 2009; Simic, 2009; Stein & Plummer, 1994), the queer theory might be understood as a concept formed by a number of features:

1) The concept perceiving sexuality loaded with power at different levels of social life, expressed discursively and limited by a binary division sexual bodies.

2) The problematization of sexual and gender categories and identities in general. Identities are always uncertain, causing displacement of identification and knowledge.

3) Rejection of traditional value system based on opposition between heterosexual and homosexual, categories.

4) Deconstruction and rejection of political asimilacionism.

5) Willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen in the domain of sexuality and conducting queer readings of texts without sex or heterosexual issues.

6) Reading against the grain.

As such, the queer theory cannot be fixed essentially to any single category of sexual subjectivity. The theoretical and practical potential of this theory lies not only in a comprehensive critique of identity, but also in the difficulty to define what queer theory is, what are its disciplinary boundaries, background, values and goals.

Consequently, for that reason, any attempt of fixed framing of the queer theory would be a violent attempt of disciplinary institutionalization and normalization.

2.4.3 Queer Theory and homosexual identity

The materialization of queer theory is a logical consequence of the historical development of theoretical and practical articulation of gender and sexual identity. By converting sexual activity into the question of sexual identity, queer theory becomes a part of the answer to the socio-political conditions from the 17th and 18th century to the present day.

As various studies suggest, the sexuality in ancient times was principally associated with social status and power, rather than with the expression of sexual desire that determines the identity (Foucault, 1976; Halperin, 1990; Todorovic, 2011).

In addition, Halperin (1990) emphasizes that sexual contact between persons of the same sex was a way of expressing social dominance of one person over another, and it was socially acceptable if it did not threaten social stratification.

Furthermore, Halperin (1990) considers that this relatively tolerant atmosphere for certain homosexual practices incited very strict prescriptions against any activity outside heterosexual marriage during the incoming Christian era, followed by cruel punishments such as castration, incarceration and public execution. This persecution was aimed to prevent the potential risk that the (pagan/Greek) homosexual activities could undermine social power of the church and the church-patriarchal hierarchy that was based on a clearly defined family unit and gender inequality, which made social and political control easier.

The same-sex relations, according to some researches (Foucault, 1976; Halperin, 1990), were not so much crimes against nature, as they were crimes against church and state. As such, homosexuality was singled out as a separate category of public interest. Precisely this kind of separation, even in a prohibitive sense, has made possible the appearance of both: *for* and *against* the same-sex sexual activity. In such circumstances, individuals who for whatever reason practiced homosexual activity began to look for ways to organize and structure their time and energy to secretly conform to their wishes.

The repression, as Todorovic (2011) notes, continued in similar form during forthcoming historical periods, and was accompanied by all the creative forms of resistance, such as public houses for same-sex services and clubs for socialization, especially during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

On the other hand, Foucault (1976) identifies 18th and especially the 19th century, as a historic turning point when it comes to the conceptualization of the same-sex sexual orientation.

The homosexual orientation as Simic (2009) affirms, is influenced by the emerging social sciences (sociology, psychology, anthropology), as well as natural sciences (medicine, psychiatry), emerged after the French Revolution, which is characterized by the proliferation of discourse on individual rights and questionable social relationships.

This growing social flexibility and fluidity was encouraged by urbanization, industrialization and trade economy. The dissolution of 'natural', 'fixed' social identity in the 19th century, with continued erosion of social-class rights acquired by birth, women's movement challenge to 'natural' gender order, and the undermining of the authority of the church by evolutionist scientific research, has led to the concerns that stable social references and definitions will be lost.

As a consequence, according to Foucault (1976), these sociological circumstances resulted as a consequence in the development of the so-called social sciences, which, along with well-established sciences, tended to scientific objectivity. The subject of the objectivity of science was human behaviour and social organization, and its goal was to define and maintain social order, which was usually protecting the interests of certain privileged groups.

Foucault’s (1976) genealogy research indicates that social sciences, along with the medical and psychiatric community, have an ambition to define what is normal and what is considered deviant sexual behavior.

Foucault’s (1976) research also tends to diagnose, explain and treat irregular same-sex and other 'perverse' sexual expressions that threaten to undermine the expansive reproductive-dependent economy, organized and controlled through monogamous, heterosexual, marital, family units.

In this context, a separate scientific discipline, sexology was developed. It begins to construct a comprehensive theory that has been extensively describing 'normal' and 'abnormal' sexuality, their manifestations, the genesis and social consequences, as evidenced by the Jonathan Katz’s (1995) research entitled *Invention of heterosexuality*. Such tendencies to put aside the same-sex sexual activity define and categorize it, were aimed to discover finally a long-kept secret that was supposed to ensure safety in the comprehensive social unpredictability and fragility. This led to the formation of homosexuality and heterosexuality as identity categories, where homosexuality was expressly pathologized.

2.4.4 Homophilic movement

As various researches suggest (Bianco, 1999; D'Emilio, 1983; Katz, 1995), the homophilic movement generally refers to social activism and political strategies employed by gay people in the late 1960s.

According to Bianco (1999), this movement was mainly directed towards the development of educational programs, decriminalization and the influence on increasing the tolerance of society in relation to gay people. The goals of the movement at its early stage were very limited and they rarely went beyond the dominant heterosexual social norms.

Some studies (Carter, 2010; Katz, 1995) affirm that hemophilic movement strongly advocated assimilation strategies, which did not question the heteronormative regime, including medical and psychological pathologization and essentialization. The movement was strongly distanced from all that would in any way transgress precise definitions of gender, such as transvestites or mannish women. The aim of Homophilic movement was mere tolerance, in which gay people deserve pity for nature's mistakes. This movement was not numerous, operating on a semisecret basis, and, bearing in mind the hostile socio-political environment (Jagose, 1996; Katz, 1995).

The strategies of homophilic movement in the late 60's and early 70's according to D'Emilio (1983) were replaced by methods of the gay and lesbian liberationist movement that marks a break with the policy of assimilationism and paves the way to radical review of the structure and value of heterosexual domination.

Carter (2010) reminds that the liberationist movement was practically initiated in 1969, during a riot caused by the police brutality at Stonewall gay bar in New York, in which according to Dawson (2015), gay voices made themselves heard. This event was both symbolically and practically the moment that made gay and lesbian identity public and political.

Thus, the liberationist movement as a reactionary cultural response, relied largely and primarily on the feminist movement and feminist theory in a united fight against the dominant culture (Carter, 2010; D'Emilio, 1983). Following the second-wave feminist theory, the liberationist movement began to build the accompanying gay and lesbian theory.

Furthermore, D'Emilio (1983) recalls that demystification of the unquestionably naturalized concept of gender roles and the alleged essentiality of the gender itself moves the focus of questioning the issue of arbitrariness of any 'natural' core of the identity. Analyzing the interdependence of social circumstances, the basic assumptions of patriarchy and the mechanisms of regulation and control, on the one hand, and gender roles, on the other, it appears that gender is nothing stable and that the possibilities to transform traditional paradigm of gender system are possible and necessary.

Although sex and gender differences are closely related, Rubin (1975) insists that they theoretically should be separated so that the relationships within themselves and with each other could be examined, which has become one of the central topics, both in gay and lesbian theory.

Lesbian theory pays special attention to the criticism of the relationship between gender and sexual differences, where gender difference was favoured to the extent that it ignored the existence and importance of lesbian identity. One of the pioneering attempts in uncovering this dynamic has made by Adrienne Rich in her text *Coercive Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (1980).

Rich (1980) points out two main ideas for lesbian theory, the first one is that lesbian lust exists in the continuum of possible affection between women, from friendship to sexual contact, while the other one stresses that the society assumes heterosexuality as inevitable, and the only possible, which removes and disrupts lesbian lust. For Rich (1980), lesbianism also exists as a disrupter of male power and as a way of authentic connections among women, ergo, category within the gender difference, but yet essentially separated from it.

On the other hand, Wittig (1992) argues that even the concept of a woman is a political category, designed by men for their needs, so that lesbians, who refuse to participate in that kind of economy, disregard the gender itself and, basically, are not women at all.

Even though, both Wittig (1992) and Rich (1980) cause strong criticism within feminist theory, they certainly made according to Lessa (2007) an important step toward the liberation of sexual difference from gender.

Apart from the feminist theory, the gay and lesbian theory, and later on the queer theory, was influenced by constructionist theory by already mentioned Foucault (1976), who reveals the socio-political dependence of (male) homosexuality, which is articulated in a developed network of power and social control. Similarly to Foucault, Jeffrey Weeks (1981, 1985), continues demonstrating the dependence of sexual roles from the different configurations of power in the society, in different historical circumstances. In this sense, the gay and lesbian theory is interested in the social mechanisms that influence the formation of discourse about what sexual behaviour is, on the one hand, and what defines sexuality as a matter of identity, on the other.

Therefore, gay and lesbian theories try to discover when, how and why practicing of homosexual sex began to be equalized with being homosexual, and how the notion of homosexuality evolved through the history and different cultures. These theories reflect on how the categories of normal (natural) and deviant (abnormal) appeared, how they work and how they are formed.

However, by the 70s of the 20th century this liberationist framework was abandoned not only because of disillusionment with grandiosely proclaimed goals, but also because of the convenience and reevaluation of strategies of power and the resistance to that power (Todorovic, 2009). Lesbians and gays soon turned to local and communal strategies of struggle, with the aim of legitimizing gay and lesbian identity and influencing on specific rather than general social structures, such as human rights and the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation in different socio-political areas (Carter, 2010; D 'Emilio 1983; Jagose 1996; Katz 1995).

As such, the movement became substantially isolated and devoted to concretize more the gay and lesbian identity and to build a distinctive community, which necessarily led to a relative exclusivity with respect to the other sex differences, such as transsexuality, bisexuality, transvestitism, sadomasochism, as well as to the exclusivity with respect to racial and class differences within the gay and lesbian community, which was constantly destabilizing it from the margins. "They did not just demand to be included, but criticized the fundamental principles that primarily centralized this specific (though supposedly universal) identity" (Jagose, 1996, p. 62).

Therefore, as these descriptions suggest, the queer theory is pluralistic and a diffuse sum of practices, far from being a unified theoretical field.

Rethinking of identity through issues of gender and sexuality generally marks the most influential achievements of the queer theory, which often came precisely from feminist theoretical environment, such as Sedgwick’s (1990, 1993), Fuss’s (1989, 1991) and Butler’s (1990, 2004).

Sedgwick (1990) is not the only one who makes a question of reconsideration of the identity. Fuss (1989), anticipating the importance of the queer theory rejects the strict division between essentialism and social constructionism, promoting instead a critical awareness of what is strategically important when it comes to the use of identity categories. On the other hand, Fuss (1989) affirms that it is not necessary to reject absolutely the identity, because it can and should be used even when it is only a fiction or something constructed.

In the introduction to chrestomathy *Inside/Outside*, Fuss (1991) enhances the necessity of an epistemological break with the past and instead calls for a reorientation from sexual difference to sexual differences, bearing in mind that it is not so much a question of finding and respecting the diversity, as it is a question of a continuous reiterative performative detection of differences.

In other words, when it comes to politics and critique of the identity, Fuss (2003) wishes to emphasize that it is not necessary to imagine utopia and a predetermined idea of liberation in order to maintain the energy charge.

In this sense, Butler (1990, 2004) shows that the gender is a regulatory construct that privileges heterosexuality and that deconstruction of normative models of the gender legitimized lesbian and gay subject positions.

As the future of the queer theory is indefinable, its present is more and more elusive. Each shortened (and expanded) description of the queer theory is necessarily arbitrary, limited and doomed to endless voids that are impossible and unnecessary to fill. Queer theory is constantly reconsidered and redefined, and is always one step ahead of any attempt to define and enclose it, thus always acknowledging its inherently fluid, weird, delegitimizing and inclusive character. Whatever the future of the queer theory is, it is relatively certain that the identity tensions will remain central in the future, with a variety of unexpected consequences deriving principally from homophobia.

2.5 Homophobia

Ever since the American Psychiatric Association (APA) took off the concept of homosexuality from the list of psychopathology in the early seventies, many investigators and scholars embarked the concept of homophobia as the main subject of their respective studies. (Agnew, et al.,1993; Aosved & Long, 2006; Black & Stevenson, 1984; Dunker,1987; Herek, 1984, 1985, 1986, 2000, 2002; Kurdek, 1988; Morrison & Franklin, 2009; Morisson & Morisson, 2011; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Rot, 2003, 2009; Weinberg,1973; Whitley, 1987).

Homophobia had been first explained by Weinberg (1973) as a fear of being in close relations with gay people. Weinberg (1973) observes that the problem with homophobia rests not in homosexual orientation of gay people, but more probably in the way that homosexuality itself is perceived by society as an illness.

Furthermore some researchers (Herek, 1984; Kimmel, 1997) argue that homophobia should be viewed as fear that implies the notion of homosexuality, also understood as fear of compromising socially accepted masculinity.

In this context, Kimmel (1997) interprets homophobia as a key principle within the patriarchal socio-cultural patterns that define masculinity. Kimmel (1997) enhanced the fact that “homophobia has to do with the personal discomfort and fear that heterosexuals may experience when associating with gay men and lesbians” (p. 3).

In addition, Raja and Stokes (1998) argue that “homophobia can range from mild feelings of discomfort around gay men and lesbians, to strong feelings of dread and hatred toward gay men and lesbians” (p. 116).

Therefore, Rodríguez-Castro et al., (2013), range homophobic attitudes, based on the theories of racism and sexism, from the most hostile and discriminatory homophobic attitudes to those that are characterized as an explicit form of latent and subtle nature, remaining silenced and invisible. In this sense, we could say that there are explicit and hostile approaches, such as verbal aggression, physical or psychological, toward gay people with evident homophobic attitudes.

Blumenfeld (1992) suggests that homophobia is usually manifested in four levels: 1) personal: that implies a tight relation between the beliefs and prejudices of an individual towards gays and lesbians; 2) interpersonal: mostly visible in situations when individuals act in accordance with their prejudices and stereotypes towards gay people; 3) institutional: which refers to the heteronormative practices and policies of governmental and religious institutions, and all those social institutions with discriminatory attitudes towards a person with homosexual orientation. This manifestation of homophobia exists mostly due to the conformity to social norms in citizens of all social levels; 4) social: is manifested in popular stereotypes of gays and lesbians and the exclusion of homosexually oriented persons from all segments of popular culture.

Based on the categorization proposed by Blumenfeld (1992), Herek (2000) identifies sexual prejudice based on sexual orientation, as a common factor describing homophobia. Intolerance of gay people is transferred and maintained by negative stereotypes, prejudices and myths that the community has on homosexual orientation.

As a result, some studies on stereotypes and prejudices towards gay people are primarily focused on deviance component in homosexuality (Bayer, 1987; Minton, 2002).

Thus, the "sexually abnormal" "mentally ill" and "wrongly adapted" are some of the common descriptions of homosexual persons (Simmons, 1965). One of those stereotypes is that homosexual people have characteristics of the opposite sex (Kite & Deaux, 1987).

Taking homophobic stereotype as a foundation, people believe that it is easy to recognize a homosexual person, and it is always clear who is homosexual and who is not. However, except in a small percentage of cases, it is impossible to conclude on the basis of appearance and manners whether someone is homosexual or not (Hyde, 1994).

As Godan (2012) notes another conventional stereotype related to homophobia, is that gay men and lesbians play heterosexual roles in their relationships. Thus a male homosexual in a couple has dominant, and the other one submissive role, while in a lesbian couple one has a men’s, and the other woman’s role. However, most of homosexual men and women are not limited to only one role, but alternate the roles with their partner, both in sexual and in life in general (Langevin, 2009).

Supporting the existence of homophobic stereotypes, Kite (1984) reminds that in one of the national surveys conducted in the United States, nearly 70% of respondents declared that homosexual men acted like women. Another research on stereotypical beliefs conducted on a sample of citizens in Scotland showed that respondents believed that by their personal characteristics, a homosexual woman is more like an average man and that homosexual man is more like an average woman (Taylor, 1983).

Also, responding to a belief that homosexual men sexually abuse children, a research conducted by Godan (2012) shows that, the sexual abuse of girls by adult heterosexuals, steams far ahead of sexual abuse of boys by adult homosexual men.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Langevin (1989, 2009) indicates that pedophiles who abuse boys are almost never heterosexuals (in their relationships with the adults). According to Langevin et al., (1989) it has been confirmed in 99 % of cases.

Similarly, other researches (Erickson, Walbeka & Seely, 1987; Finkelhor, 1984, 2006; Johnson & Shrier, 1987) demonstrate that very rarely children are abused by heterosexual women, and even less by lesbians.

Unfortunately, gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, as well as heterosexuals who are perceived as gay people, have been daily targets of violence, discrimination and stigmatization (Herek, 2001). By the review, which included 23 tests conducted in an appropriate sample of gay people, Berrill (1992) finds that the average percentage of participants who were physically assaulted is 17%, while 44% of the participants declared to be under threat of violence, and 80% were exposed to verbal assaults. Much more open hostility is present in relation to the homosexual people than against any other stereotyped group. Intolerance is also present in the family, and about 10% of those who acknowledge their sexual orientation to their primary family were expelled from the house mostly by the father (Savin & Williams, 1994).

2.5.1 Homophobia in Serbia[25]

If we recall that civil war on the overall territory of Ex Yugoslavia lasted from 1990 up to 1995, the problem of homophobia and other issues related to human rights of homosexually oriented persons, have not been subjects of serious interest in Serbian society until the late 90's of the 20th century. After the general framework agreement for peace in Ex Yugoslavia was signed in November 1995, Gotan (2012) reminds that the problem of homophobia has been

[25] The problem of homophobia in Serbia was already tackled in the introduction of the present study. This chapter refers to the subject in more detail.

brought to public attention primarily by numerous nongovernmental organizations such as: “Labris, Gay Straight Alliance, Women’s Study Center, Center for Free Elections and Democracy and Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia” (p.14).

However, a certain empowerment and intensification of LGBTQI activities did not happen before the early 2000s, which was even then partially enabled by democratic and social changes after the national elections held during 2000.

Finally, starting from 2009, discrimination based on sexual orientation was officially prohibited as a response of the Serbian Government to the demands of the process of association to the European Union[26].

Unfortunately, the adopted legislation remained meaningless mostly for the fact that it was not implemented in reality. The implementation of these laws is still deeply marked by discriminatory statements and actions of state actors, as well as by lack of political will for the prevention of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. According to Gay Straight Alliance (2015), many victims of such violent attack cases were not reported to the police, on the one hand due to a lack of trust in state institutions, and also because of the fear of public disclosure of their homosexual orientation.

These and similar threats resulted in violent riots 10 October 2010 when one of the last Pride parades was held one in Belgrade. In contrast to Serbia, according to Sanjuán, Callejón and Méndez, (2008), Spanish LGBTQI associations usually do not face such kind of obstacles in organising events such as Pride parades or festivals. Protest events, even not so frequent, take place in public mostly without police intervention.

[26] Anti-Discrimination Law was ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia during the March 2009 and published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia, no. 22/09 dated March 26, 2009. Anti-Discrimination law also includes sexual orientation as a basis for protection against discrimination.

In addition, Pew Research Center, (2014) confirms that Spanish society as one of the most tolerant of homosexuality frequently doesn't coincide with Church's attitudes towards sexual issues such as: abortion, LGBTQI rights, pre-marital sex and stem cell research.

Finally, according to Pew Research Center, (2014), 55 % of Spanish people believe that homosexuality as morally acceptable, and that gay couples should have the freedom to live their lives as they wish. This percentage of acceptance is considerably encouraging compared to the Balkan countries such as Serbia (29%) and Bosnia (22%), where acceptance of homosexuality is significantly lower.

Therefore, the prevailing negative attitude toward LGBTQI in Serbian is not surprising if we take into account the fact that there are a significant number of those who claim having nothing against gay people but fundamentally disapprove the public manifestation of the struggle for their rights. Given that Pride parades represent the attitude towards human rights of homosexually oriented persons as well as the public expression of their homosexuality, this discrepancy leads to the conclusion that neutral and positive publicly expressed attitudes are the result of social pressure to be tolerant and to respect differences, while the real attitudes of truly negative.

If we consider legislative and practical respect for the rights of LGBTQI people as an indicator of democracy, we might observe that Serbia is still not ready to accept homosexuality as something natural that can't be destroyed or eradicated by physical aggression.

2.5.2 Researches on homophobia in Serbia

Besides the NGO sector, some Serbian researchers contributed to popularization of the homophobia issue on a national level (Golubovic, Kuzmanovic & Vasovic, 1995; Lazarevic, et al., 2015; Petrovic, 2013; Radoman, 2012; Visnjic, 2012, 2014; Zivanovic et al, 2014).

As we noted, despite the alleged development in terms of human rights, reinforcement of democracy, and equal and fair opportunities for all persons, Radoman (2012, p.150) argues that homophobia, has not been the subject of serious public interest in Serbia until 2009.

For that reason, researches on homophobia are very rare in Serbia. Actually, according to homophobia as a subject is frequently studied within a broader context of attitudes towards other marginalized groups such as: disabled persons, gypsies, drug addicts and HIV positive persons. Homophobia as a specific subject in Serbian researches is generally approached as a self-sufficient description and explanation of the people’s prejudice and beliefs on homosexuality as a social phenomenon.

In that context, Golubovic et al., (1995) observe a potential readiness of Serbian people for acceptance or social distancing in relation to the different social groups. Their results showed that social distance[27] was mostly oriented towards fascists groups, drug addicts and HIV positive people. Homosexually oriented persons were also highly scaled in view of social rejection with 64% of expressed social distance. In other words, according to Golubovic et al., (1995), pensioners, workers and housewives rejected all the "deviant groups", while students showed the lowest level of social distance towards gay people. The precise results, expressed in percentages indicated that peasants expressed highest levels of social distance towards gay people 82%, pensioners 79%, housewives 74%, workers 73% and students 27%.

[27] For a detailed explanation of social distance see chapter 2.6 *Attitudes*.

In recent years, a research from 2008 conducted by the Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID), on a sample of 967 participants of both genders, showed that the attitude towards homosexuality was extremely negative. In this regard, 70% of participants believed that homosexuality should be treated as a disease while 51% of people agreed that the state institutions should work more efficiently on suppression of homosexuality. Interestingly, 60 % of participants believed that homosexuality was dangerous for society. In the same research, 73 percent of participants expressed disagreement with the following statement: Gay parade as a legitimate way of fighting for gay rights should be de regularly held.

In attempting to develop a scale measuring homophobia in Serbia, Zivanovic et al., (2014) focus their research on the level of awareness, misconceptions and prejudice against homosexuality. As potential factors influencing homophobia, they investigated socio-demografic variables such as: social discrimination, political orientation, public and personal aversion toward homosexuality and religiosity. Their findings indicated that public and personal aversion towards homosexuality in Serbia is at a particularly high correlation. Although it was possible to make a certain distinction between affective and cognitive component of homophobia, Zivanovic et al., (2014) conclude that social condemnation and personal discomfort towards homosexuality are tightly related categories in Serbian society.

Finally, in one of the most recent researches on homophobia in Serbia, Lazarevic, Orlic and Knezevic (2015), investigate the importance of defensive function of explicit homophobia. Combining several implicit and explicit techniques in a sample consisted of 282 participants, they hypothesized that the underlying causes of explicit homophobia actually find their ground in latent attraction towards same sex. Presuming that “latent homosexuality should manifest as explicit negative attitude toward same sex objects”, Lazarevic et al., (2015) obtain quite opposite results. Their study revealed that not only that the stronger anti-gay attitudes were related to stronger implicit aversion to stimuli with homosexual content, but they also concluded that using physiological and other implicit techniques are to certain extent limited to embrace the entire "relationship between physiological parameters and psychological measures of affective reactions and states" (p.15).

In all these researches depicting homophobia in Serbia, we can identify indisputable social influence as the most responsible factor for the formation of such attitudes. Also significant factors found in these studies are the prevailing social orientations such as traditionalism, authoritarianism nationalism and conformism. Also, an important factor in the social context of Serbia is the politicians who speak negatively about homosexual persons as well as of their right to hold a pride parade. More precisely, we can't say that their views expressed in public are always negative. On the contrary, their publically expressed opinions are often neutral or even positive, while they sincerely oppose pride parades justifying their arguments with the concern for the safety of participants and other citizens.

In conclusion, although the researches on attitudes toward homosexuality in Serbia showed a very high level of homophobia, some of the unexpected findings, especially those suggesting that Serbian citizens would help the victims of violence in spite of a different sexual orientation (Gotan, 2012, p.12), raise hope that, with a continuous education and information, a more tolerant society could be built in the future.

2.5.3 Factors influencing homophobia

In addition to heteronormativity as key factor influencing media representation of LGBTQI, we shall explain other potential predictors of homophobia such as: *conformity to* *social norms, religiosity and religion, interpersonal contacts and the third person effect* (Detenber et al., 2007, 2013; Perloff, 2002; Whitley & Kite, 2010; Yaszek, 2010).

2.5.4 Conformity to social norms

Mostly, due to binary nature of gender roles, homosexuality in media is commonly represented as a constant threat to universal social norms (Matteson, 1997; Yaszek, 2010), and determined as a public danger that tends to question the traditional idea of a socially acceptable family (Clammer, 1997). Social norms as a concept was firstly studied and explained by Wesley Perkins and Alan Berkowitz (1986) who, theorizing on a general bases noted that our behavior is influenced by incorrect perceptions of how other members of our social groups think and act. Social norms are according to Singer (1981) deeply involved in modeling attitudes, ideas, and values. Norms are shaped through repeated interpersonal interactions and serve as a form of tacit control over members of a group.

Accordingly, Prentice and Miller (1996), suggest that the norm simply must be powerful enough to induce people to act in ways that do not correspond to their private thoughts and feelings. Individuals recognize that their own norm-congruent behaviour is at variance with their true sentiments (p.162).

Thus, Berkowitz (2004) considers that social norms intervention correct public unawareness by warning the greater part of the population that their behaviour is actually more normative and healthy than they think. This normative response in a certain way give a social consent to take action on values of moderation or non-use by bringing behaviour more closely in line with personal attitudes and removes the fear of embarrassment associated with acting in ways that are thought to be different.

2.5.5 Religiosity and religion

A huge variety of researchers have strongly indicated that religiosity is frequently connected with unfavourable attitudes toward minority groups such as gay people (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson & Burris, 1994; Detenber et al., 2007, 2013; Hunsberger & Jackson, 1990; Whitley & Kite, 2010).

According to Detenber et al., (2013), “the religiosity construct comprises two dimensions: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic religiosity*” (p.183).

One of the characteristics of extrinsic religiousness is according to Allport and Ross (1967) the ability of an individual to use religion for achieving some personal, social or political goals. Extrinsically religious person essentially perceives religion as an instrument to an end. It is used by people who go to religious institutions (churches, mosques) and claim certain religious ideologies to establish or maintain social networks while minimally adhering to the canons of the religion. People with dominant extrinsic religious course are more likely to adapt to social norms and demands rather than what the religion requires, and are often likely to modify religious beliefs to serve their own social or political goals.

According to Whitley and Kite (2010), a person intrinsically religious honestly believes in their religion and all its dogmas, trying to live their lives as the religion moralizes that they are supposed to. This corresponds with Daniel Batson (1982) who noted that, while a person with an extrinsic religious orientation sees religion as a means to an end, a person with an intrinsic orientation sees their religion as that end. Whitley et al., (2010) observe that their religion is an active directing force, not just a tool used to reach self-serving ends. Those with intrinsic orientation find their religion to be the most important aspect of their life and seek to contextualize other aspects of their life through their religion (p.27).

Consequently, Detenber et al., (2013) hypothesize that Intrinsic religiosity is always a stronger predictor of negative attitudes towards homosexuality than extrinsic religiosity.

For Detenber et al., (2013), it is reasonable that “persons who are intrinsically religious are more disposed to manifest negative reception of homosexuality, and be less accepting of gay people because such attitudes and a lack of acceptance are congruent with their religious beliefs” (p. 183).

In addition, all monotheistic religions strongly condemn homosexuality for being an unnatural act (Whitley et al., 2010). Finally, as a consequence, some recent researchers argue, that most religions tend to characterize behaviors associated with homosexuality as socially dangerous, dirty and perverted (Longin, 2014; Stapic, 2013).

2.5.6 Interpersonal contact

In view of reception of homosexuality, Allport’s contact hypothesis (1954) provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of contact in improving intergroup attitudes. This hypothesis assumes that a quality relationship with the members of other people's group can be an effective way to develop positive attitudes toward that group. Social contacts vary in *intensity* (frequency of contacts, number of participants in a situation where there is contact) and *quality* (the nature of the interaction with members of the other group). Contact hypothesis is mainly focused on quality.

To be precise, Allport (1954) holds a view that the contact itself is not sufficient to correct the attitudes of individuals towards another group, but the contact must include equal status among members of different groups, common objectives, intergroup cooperation and support that this intergroup contact would be provided by the institutions. A contact that meets these criteria to a greater extent promotes positive attitudes toward another group more than one that does not meet them. The positive effects of the contact that meets these criteria have been demonstrated cross-culturally in various studies (Detenber et al., 2103; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Christ 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Wagner, Van Dick, Pettigrew & Christ, 2003).

If we take into consideration interpersonal or intergroup contact as it was hypothesized and theorized by Allport (1954) within the intergroup contact theory, it will be unambiguously brought to our attention the fact that positive interactions between members of diverse groups decrease negative intergroup attitudes, mostly when these group belong to equal or similar social status, if they share common goals, cooperation, and positive institutional models (Elliot, 2010; Gentry, 1987; Pettigrew, 1998).

As an illustration, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) study showed that the contact not only leads to improvement of attitudes toward members of other groups in a specific situation, but also affects the perception of the members of the group in other contexts, as well as more favourable attitudes towards members of other groups, which are not included in the contact situation.

In addition, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) indicated that precisely in the studies in which are targeted those groups that represent minority sexual orientations, the effects of contact are significantly higher than for other stigmatized groups, such as for example those based on physical or mental disability.

Other researchers have recently become concerned with the processes that are fundamental for contact effects, categorizing mediators such as *reduced intergroup anxiety* (Hewstone, 2004; Vonofakou, Hewstone & Voci, 2007), perceptions of *personal and group* *threat* (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Pettigrew, 2007), *increased empathy* (Hodson, 2008), self-other overlap (Elliot, 2010; Vonofakou et al,. 2007), and personal disclosure (Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007).

As we can see, one of the most significant aspects influencing anti-gay prejudices is the amount of contact a heterosexual individual establish with gay men and lesbians. Specifically, prior research found that as contact increased between heterosexual individuals and gay men and lesbians, anti-gay prejudices decreased among heterosexual individuals (Herek, 1993). The relationship between contact with gay men and lesbians and heterosexual individuals' attitudes towards gay men and lesbians is surprisingly strong.

For example, Herek and Glunt (1993) found that "intergroup contact predicted attitudes towards gay men more strongly than any other demographic, social or psychological variable, including gender, race, education, age, and religious affiliation" (p. 234).

Under the most favorable circumstances, contact as such is one of the most valuable ways of reducing intergroup prejudice and intolerance (Herek & Capitanio, 1995). The contact effect has a wide range of manifestations within a diverse spectrum of target dimensions such as race, age sexual orientation, physical or mental diseases (Elliot, 2010).

The advantages of contact expand beyond the individuals directly involved in the contact situation; attitudes towards the entire out-group and out-groups not involved in the interaction also improve (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Even individuals who have not been in contact situations benefit vicariously from the intergroup interactions of others.

Wright et al., (1997) identified the "extended contact" effect, which occurs when awareness of the fact that an in-group member has a cross-group friendship leads to more positive intergroup attitudes. This finding is particularly encouraging because knowledge of indirect friendships reduces bias without exposing individuals to the anxiety and threat sometimes associated with intergroup encounters (Wright et al., 1997).

Both the general researches on tolerance and intergroup relations and the specific corpus of investigations on attitudes towards homosexuality in particular suggest that approval should be more significant among young teenage residents of large metropolitan areas rather than among those from small towns or rural areas (Anderson & Fetner, 2009; Detenber, et al., 2013; Smith, 2011).

2.5.7 The third person effect

As the media represent one of the most important agents of socialization (Havelka, 2001), consequently, the bias in the observation of people are reflected and manifested in the perception of media influence. One of the ways in which the public perceives that the media and the messages affect them, is known as *the third person effect*. The third person effect is defined as our perception that a media message is addressed with a much larger and more powerful effect on others, than on us (Perloff, 2002). According to Davison (1983), the term *the third person* was created because of the expectation that the messages would not have a profound impact on "*me* (grammatical: the first person) or *you* (grammatical: the second person), but to *them* – the third persons" (p. 4). As a conclusion, *third person* effect is actually a general tendency of people to evaluate themselves as more resistant to the media influence than other people.

According to McLeod, Detenber and Eveland (2001), people use a very simplified explanation of the perceived influence of the media on other people. In such a simplified interpretation, people find that the extent of the influence that the media have on other people equals their exposure to the media. In other words, the bigger the exposure to the media, the higher level of influence of the media on those people.

Finally, the third person effect is made up of two components: *perceptive,* which indicates that people believe that the media have more influence on other people than on themselves, and *behavioural*, assuming that people's perceptions of the impact of media on the others leads to certain behavior (Gunther, Perloff & Tsfati, 2008).

2.5.8 Principal factors influencing the magnitude of the third person effect

The findings about the existence of the third person effect are mostly verified and generally more or less consistent in various public campaigns (Saliven, 1998), negative political marketing, advertizing and television programs with violent scenes (Conners, 2005).

On the other hand, the factors influencing the size of the third person effect are various, and we will explain some of them:

1) *The social desirability of the message* - According to some researchers (Johansson, 2010; Paul, Saliven & Dupagne, 2000; Perloff, 2002), individuals are reluctant to admit that they are influenced by the message, when such recognition reflects negatively on their self enhancement. The third person effect should be particularly pronounced when the media message is perceived as socially undesirable, that is, when individuals believe that a particular message cannot be that good for them, or when it is not plausible to admit that they are influenced by that kind of media program. The other side of these results is even more interesting, assuming that the third person effect is associated with their aspiration to preserve self-esteem, many individuals are generally more likely to admit being influenced by socially desirable messages that are enhancing their self-views (Johansson, 2010).

In that sense, Perloff (1999) affirms that six studies compared the magnitude of the third person effect for socially desirable and socially undesirable messages. The socially desirable messages included instructions about seat belts in the car, pro-social behavior and traffic safety. The undesirable massages contained news about a new diet pills that "melts fat while sleeping”, violence in the media and the extreme right-wing political parties. According to Perloff (1999), all the socially undesirable massages have produced a greater third person effect than messages with socially desirable content in all six researches.

2) *Social distance*[28] – The extent of the third person effect according to Johansson (2010) depends on the perception of "other people", which the individuals have in mind while assessing media effects on other people. The concept of social distance was first described as a degree of understanding and feelings that people experience in relation to each other (Bogardus, 1925). Examining the phenomenon of social distance in light of third person effect, (David et al., 2002) define this term as a "perceived similarity, familiarity and identification" and points out that there are at least two ways of conceptualization: 1) Social distance is a continuum that ranges from "the same as me / just like me" to "completely opposite from me"; and 2) Social distance reflects the heterogeneity of the audience. Therefore, according to (David et al., 2002), social distance represents in fact a psychological distance, the impression that the difference between me and others increases, as the observed distance between ourselves and others with whom we compare increases. Social distance, therefore, is not dependent on whether there are influences of the media or not, it is a perceptive phenomenon.

3) *The role of education* - One of the continuing questions which appearing in the third person effect researches is whether the effect is stronger and more prevalent among highly educated people (Paul et al., 2000; Perloff, 2002). The educated people, according to this view,

[28] For supplementary information on social distance see chapter 2.6 Attitudes.

express a tendency to see themselves as intellectually more superior and therefore should be observed as more resistant to persuasive communication. In line with this argument, in a meta-analysis Perloff (2002) found that the perception of the third person effect significantly increases more significantly on a sample of students than in a random sample not consisted of students. Generally speaking, education has a changeable success in predicting the third person effect and does not provide in every situation a desirable explanation for the effects found. For this reason, we can conclude that psychological processes have a key role in explaining the third person effect, not the external factors, such as education.

4) *The role of ego-involvement* - The ego-involvement can be defined as identification with a particular social group and possessing of extreme positions on issues that are relevant to that group (Griffin, 2012). People with very distinct views and strong identification with the group, often accuse the media of the intentional broadcast of stories against their side (view), which is called a hostile media bias (Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985). According to Conners (2005), the ego-involvement has the influence on perception of the effects of media through several mechanisms, such as: the assumption that the public constitutes a political group that is deceivable in relation to the exposed communication, already existing beliefs about media bias that affect the perception of certain messages and the observed receptivity of a person to the influence of the media. When people are strongly involved in some issues, their assessments on the media are extreme and exaggerated. Such assessments can polarize attitudes and lead to separation of social groups and even more, to emphatic intolerance among them (Perloff, 2002).

5) *Self-esteem* **-** Chapin and Coieman (2002) suggest that the perception of the third person effect exists to strengthen and increase self-esteem. They allege that the early researchers examined the role of self-esteem as a mechanism located in the perception of a third person, but

they were not able to adequately measure self-esteem. Self-esteem can be defined as a relatively stable set of attitudes about oneself, which apply to self-description and evaluation of one's behaviour and attributes (Chapin, 1999). The concept of the already mentioned self-enhancement and of self-esteem are connected: self-enhancement refers to the desire of people to increase their self-esteem, by seeing themselves as smarter or otherwise more superior compared to other people. The explanation of self- enhancement in terms of the third person effect, suggests that the perception of a person as immune to media messages increases the confidence of that person. Several studies have examined the connection between the third person effect and self-esteem. These findings are important for the hypothesis of self-enhancement in explaining the third person effect, because it is considered that the individuals with high self-esteem use mechanisms of self- enhancement more than people with low self-esteem (Meirick, 2003).

6) *Paternalism* **-** In attempting to explain the behavioural component of the hypotheses about the third person effect and the reason why this effect leads to the support of certain activities, such as censorship and regulation of certain media (as behavioral consequences of the third person effect), Golan and Banning (2008) identified the variable of paternalism as a possible explanation. These authors defined paternalism as parental behavior and denial of other people rights, but with good intentions. This term is used for the hypothesis about why would people who believe that other people are more "affected" by media contents (such as, for example, advertisements for gambling and pornographic content) ask for censorship for the others, although they don't perceive the content as harmful to themselves. In the context of the perception of the third person effect, paternalism can be manifested as a concern for the welfare of others and a sense that the person knows what is the best for the others. It can also foster the

perception that other people are at risk when exposed to a certain type of media content (Golan & Banning, 2008).

7) What are *Socio-demographic variables* in the magnitude of the third person effect? According to Perloff (2002), there is limited empirical evidence that demographic factors such as age and gender, affect the observed media effects on other people or on oneself. Also, some studies (Tiedge et al., 1991; Rucincki & Salmon, 1990; Wau & Youn, 2004) have analyzed the impact of gender on the third person effect. Wau and Youn, (2004) found that women show a higher third person effect in relation to other adult individuals in the field of political marketing, and higher effect compared to younger voters in the area of negative political marketing. Also, a study conducted by Perloff (1993) showed that the perception of the third person effect for undesirable massages is positively correlated with age. In the area of negative political marketing, Wau and Youn (2004) revealed that older individuals observed higher effects of "aggressive" commercials on other adults and on younger voters. In addition, Rucincki and Salmon (1990) found a significant extent of the third person effect only among highly educated and older individuals.

Finally, as we explained homophobia and identified the most significant factors influencing its magnitudes, we should present the instruments measuring this phenomenon.

2.5.9 Measuring of homophobia

The increasing tolerance and social acceptance of this minority group, as well as studies dedicated to attitudes towards homosexuality in reception processes have achieved in the past decades significant relevance in the area of social sciences (Gato, Fontaine & Carneiro, 2012; Herek, 2006, 2007; Kelley, 2001; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Oliveira & Nogueira, 2010; Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2014).

The growing visibility of persons with homosexual orientation may lead people to think that rejection and discrimination due to sexual orientation is no longer a problem. However, as affirmed by Gato et al., (2012) “if a homosexually oriented identity is eventually considered to be a possible and healthy orientation, on the other hand, there is still persistent prejudice, misinformation and discriminatory behaviour directed towards gay people with different outcomes and consequences” (p. 11).

The complexity of the subject lies in the fact that the evolution of prejudices toward gay men and lesbians had almost the same theoretical background as those studies of racism and sexism (Bierly, 1985; Ficarrotto, 1990; Henly & Pincus, 1978).

The racism (Pereira, Monteiro & Camino, 2009), and sexism (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995; Castillo, Betancor et al., 2003; Crocker, Major & Steele, 1998; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Morrison & Franklin, 2009; Morrison & Parriag, 1999; Rowe, 1990), were widely studied and elaborated as separate concepts.

In contrast, as it will be presented later, Morrison and Morrison (2002) combined both, modern racism and sexism, as inspiring models with the principal aim to introduce a new concept of modern homonegativity.

On the other hand, attitudes toward gay people had been usually associated with sexual conservatism (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Smith, 1971) and religious fundamentalism (Agnew, Thompson, Smith, Gramzow, & Currey, 1993; Fornstein, 1988; Fyfe, 1983; West, 1977).

In addition, the reduced and stereotypical representation of gays and lesbians in television was also extensively investigated (Fejes & Petrich, 1993; Streimater, 2009). Usually very negative representation and clichés were ranging from ugly and aggressive, to dangerous and insane (Collins, 2007).

The first development of instruments to measure anti-homosexual prejudice intended principally to verify its homophobic and sexist nature (Allport, 1954; Herek, 1986; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Kite & Deaux, 1986; Riddle, 1973). On the other hand, as occurred with other groups that were objects of discrimination, prejudice against lesbians and gay men also became more dissimulated.

As a result, new measuring approaches and evaluation instruments were designed (Morrison, Kenny & Harrington, 2005; Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Park, 2001; Raja & Stokes, 1998**;** Zivanovic et al., 2014).

Consequently, there are currently various types of instruments measuring negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Instruments evaluating degrees of homophobia thus range from the most traditional to the most modern ones, depending mostly on theoretical approaches and backgrounds of the researchers.

Traditional measurements are mostly characterized by avoidance of intimacy with the members of other groups, and perception that other groups are a threat. On the other hand, as Gato et al., (2012) enhance, modern measurement is mainly based on beliefs such as: a) “Gay people demand unnecessary social changes, b) prejudice and discrimination are phenomenon of the past, (c) lesbians and gay men put too much emphasis on their sexuality and in doing so, they become responsible for their own marginalization” (p.12).

2.5.10 Traditional measurements of homophobia

With regard to traditional measurements, one of the earliest modern instruments defining and measuring specific components of homophobia was the scale developed by Dorothy Riddle (1973). The Riddle scale of homophobia is a very simple eight-item scale where each item is interrelated with a set of attributes and beliefs; respondents are assigned a position on the scale based on the attributes they exhibit and beliefs they hold.

The Riddle scale of homophobia is commonly divided into two four-item sub-scales, the homophobic levels of attitude (first four items) and the positive levels of attitude (last four items).

Table 1. *The Riddle homophobia scale 1*

ITEMS - *Homophobic Levels of Attitudes*
1. *REPULSION:* Same-gender sexuality is seen as a "crime against nature." Lesbians and gay men are sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: imprisonment, hospitalization, aversion therapy, electroshock, etc.
2. *PITY:* Heterosexual chauvinism. Heterosexuality is seen as preferable. Any possibility of "becoming straight" should be reinforced, and those who seem to be "born that way" should be pitied.
3. *TOLERANCE:* Same-gender sexuality is considered just a phase of adolescent development that many people go through and most people "grow out of." Thus, lesbians and gay men are less mature than heterosexuals and should be treated with the protectiveness and indulgence one uses with a child. Lesbians and gay men should not be given positions of authority because they are still working through their adolescent behavior.
4. *ACCEPTANCE:* Still implies that there is something to accept. It is characterized by such statements as "You're not a lesbian to me, you're a person!", "What you do in bed is your own business," or "That's fine with me as long as you don't flaunt it!"

Source: Dorothy Riddle (1973)

Table 2. *The Riddle homophobia scale 2.*

ITEMS - *Positive Levels of Attitudes*
1. *SUPPORT:* The basic civil liberties position. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware that homophobia is wrong and they work to safeguard the rights of lesbians and gay men.
2. *ADMIRATION:* Acknowledge that being lesbian or gay in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their homophobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.
3. *APPRECIATION:* Value the diversity of individuals and see lesbians and gay men as a valid part of that diversity. People at this level are willing to combat homophobia in themselves and others.
4. *NURTURANCE:* Assume that lesbians and gay men are indispensable in our society. People at this level view lesbians and gay men with genuine affection and delight and are willing to be allies and advocates.

Source: Dorothy Riddle (1973)

Subsequently, Hudson and Rickets (1980) created a new scale defining it as *Index of Homophobia (IHP)* that consisted of 25 items and primarily was focused on measurement of respondents' fear and discomfort with homosexuality.

Following the tendency imposed by chronologically earlier scales to measure, both explicit and subtle homophobias, Herek (1988), developed *The Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men* (ATLG) Scale as a concise instrument for measurement of heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Herek's scale consisted of twenty diverse statements, 10 of them were with reference to gay men (ATG subscale) and the other 10 referred to lesbians (ATL subscale), to which respondents specified their degree of agreement or disagreement to given statements.

Table 3. *Herek's scale of The Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATLG)*

ITEMS
1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society.
2. A woman's homosexuality should not be a cause for job discrimination in any situation. (Reverse-scored)
3. Female homosexuality is bad for society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes.*
4. State laws against private sexual behavior between consenting adult women should be abolished. (Reverse-scored)
5. Female homosexuality is a sin.
6. The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in American morals.
7. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem unless society makes it a problem. (Reverses cored)
8. Female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.
9. Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality.
10. Lesbians are sick.

Source: Herek (1988), Revised Long Versions (ATLG-R)

Table 4. *Attitude Toward Gay Man subscale (ATG)*

ITEMS
11. Male homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples. (Reverse-scored)
12. I think male homosexuals are disgusting.
13. Male homosexuals should not be allowed to teach school.
14. Male homosexuality is a perversion.
15. Male homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men. (Reverse-scored)
16. If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them.
17. I would not be too upset if I learned that my son were a homosexual. (Reverse-scored)
18. Sex between two men is just plain wrong.
19. The idea of male homosexual marriages seems ridiculous to me.
20. Male homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned.

Source: Herek (1988), Revised Long Versions (ATLG-R)

Furthermore, in 1991 Paulhus and Reid (1991) introduced a more extensive scale that consisted of 40 items. This scale was named *The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR)* and tended to measure "self-deception enhancement," described as deformation that the respondent applies to feel better about himself, as well as "impression management" viewed as the tendency to present oneself in a positive way to others.

2.5.11 Modern measurements of homophobia

Using traditional experiences Raja and Stokes (1998) created a scale capacitated to evaluate attitudes toward lesbians and gay men independently, as well as to cover the individual and institutional mechanisms of homophobia. Based upon the previous scales measuring homophobia, Raja and Stokes *(1998)* expected that homophobia measured by their Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS) would be consistent with other homophobia scales and also with attitudes articulated toward lesbians.

In summary, Modern Homophobia Scale (Raja & Stokes, 1998) explores three subtle dimensions referring to both gay men and lesbians:

1) *Personal Discomfort* which is defined as the need to avoid personal contact with gays and lesbians, because of a feeling of discomfort when gays and lesbians are present and, the belief that gays and lesbians are sick and are in a certain way perverted.

2) *Deviation and/or Changeability* are related to the belief that gays and lesbians can change their sexual orientation when they want, or if they want.

3) *Institutional homophobia* is the third dimension referring to the organized or systematic practice of excluding gay people and lesbians from governmental, entrepreneurial, religious or professional institutions. Institutional homophobia does not measure the acts of discrimination itself, but the degree to which people believe that institutional policies and practices should be freed of deviations related to socially unacceptable sexual orientation.

The Modern Homophobia Scale also consists of two subscales: 1) subscale of attitudes toward gays (MHS-G) with a total of 22 items, and 2) subscale attitudes toward lesbians (MHS-L) with a total of 24 items.

Each subscale measures the abovementioned three factors (personal discomfort personnel, deviation and institutional homophobia) corresponding with measures of homophobic attitudes toward gays and lesbians to a personal level (the first two factors) and institutional level (the third factor). Responses are evaluated with a Likert response format from 1 (strongly agree) to type 5 (strongly disagree). Higher scores are interpreted as more positive attitudes toward homosexuality.

Table 5. *Items of Modern Homophobia Scale-L*

ITEMS
1. Employers should provide health care benefits to the partners of their lesbian employees.
2. Teachers should try to reduce their student's prejudice toward lesbians.
3. Lesbians who adopt children do not need to be monitored more closely than heterosexual parents.
4. Lesbians should be allowed to be leaders in religious organizations. (R)
5. Lesbians are as capable as heterosexuals of forming long-term romantic relationships.
6. School curricula should include positive discussion of lesbian topics.
7. Marriages between two lesbians should be legal.
8. Lesbians should not be allowed to join the military. (R)
9. I would not vote for a political candidate who was openly lesbian. (R)
10. Lesbians are incapable of being good parents. (R)
11. I am tired of hearing about lesbians' problems. (R)
12. I wouldn't mind going to a party that included lesbians.
13. I wouldn't mind working with a lesbian.
14. I am comfortable with the thought of two women being romantically involved.
15. It's all rights with me if I see two women holding hands.
16. If my best female friend was dating a woman, it would not upset me.
17. Films that approve of female homosexuality bother me. (R)
18. I welcome new friends who are lesbian.
19. I don't mind companies using openly lesbian celebrities to advertise their products.
20. I would be sure to invite the same-sex partner of my lesbian friend to my party.
21. I don't think it would negatively affect our relationship if I learned that one of my close relatives was a lesbian.
22. Physicians and psychologists should strive to find a cure for female homosexuality. (R)
23. Lesbians should undergo therapy to change their sexual orientation. (R)
24. Female homosexuality is a psychological disease. (R)

Source: Raja and Stokes (1998). Note: (R) Indicates that item is reverse scored.

Table 6. *Items of MHS-G*

ITEMS
1. I wouldn't mind going to a party that included gay men.
2. I would not mind working with a gay man.
3. I welcome new friends who are gay.
4. I would be sure to invite the same-sex

partner of my gay male friend to my party.

5. I won't associate with a gay man for fear of catching AIDS. (R)

6. I don't think it would negatively affect our relationship if I learned that one of my close relatives was gay.

7. I am comfortable with the thought of two men being romantically involved.

8. I would remove my child from class if I found out the teacher was gay. (R)

9. It's all right with me if I see two men holding hands

10. Male homosexuality is a psychological disease. (R)

11. Physicians and psychologists should strive to find a cure for male homosexuality.(R)

12. Gay men should undergo therapy to change their sexual orientation. (R)

13. Gay men could be heterosexual if they really wanted to be. (R)

14. I don't mind companies using openly gay male celebrities to advertise their products.

15. I would not vote for a political candidate who was openly gay. (R)

16. Hospitals shouldn't hire gay male doctors. (R)

17. Gay men shouldn't be allowed to join the military. (R)

18. Films that approve of male homosexuality bother me. (R)

19. Gay men should not be allowed to be leaders in religious organizations. (R)

20. Marriages between two gay men should be legal.

21. I am tired of hearing about gay men's problems. (R)

22. Gay men want too many rights. (R)

Source: Raja and Stokes (1998). Note. (R) Indicates that item is reverse scored.

Developing the Modern Homophobia Scale, Raja and Stokes (1998) anticipated that “men would have more homophobic scores than women, and that man and women would be more homophobic toward gay people of their own sex than toward the opposite sex” (p. 117). Argument proposed by Raja and Stokes (1998) justifying the idea to measure attitudes toward homosexual men and attitudes toward lesbians separately was the fact that some researchers (Smith, 1971; Kurdek, 1985) had earlier detected a correlation between the sex of the respondent and the target (lesbians vs. gay men) of prejudicial attitudes.

Another reason justifying the importance of measuring separately discriminatory attitudes towards lesbian and gay people is the fact, as several posterior studies suggested, men evaluated less negatively lesbians than gay men (Morrison & Morrison, 2011; Rot, 2008; Trebjesanin et al., 2011), because men attach a high value to erotic female homosexuality, and specifically by observing or imagining sexual activities between two women (Rot, 2008). What's more, Kite (1985) suggests that men are commonly more homophobic than women, even though heterosexuals are generally likely to be more homophobic toward gay people of their own sex.

Furthermore, Raja and Stokes (1998), inspired in earlier findings of Herek (1988), predicted that respondents who had gay or lesbian friends or acquaintances would report less homophobia than those who were not familiar with a lesbian or gay man.

Indeed, posterior studies consistently reported that people are significantly more likely to hold negative attitudes if they are male (Herek 1988, 2000; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Simon, 1995), have a religious affiliation (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Seltzer, 1992), are of an ethnic minority (Klamen et al., 1999), and have few lesbian or gay acquaintances (Newman et al., 2002).

Finally, the Report of the Council of Europe (2010) confirms that people, who know other persons with homosexual orientation, have more positive attitudes towards them. The fact that they were open minded is a way that they achieved contact with other minority groups was considered one of the factors that positively influence the attitudes of heterosexual persons.

2.5.12 Modern Homonegativity Scale

According to Morrison and Morrison (2002), public manifestations of homophobia are getting reduced as people become more familiar with the phenomenon of homophobia. Nevertheless, people’s private attitudes may still have signs of homo-negativity due to popular stereotypes and other factors.

One of the most recent scales is The Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS) developed by Melanie and Tod Morrison (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). This scale as well as other modern scales that we presented above is divided into two subscales. One subscale refers to attitudes towards gay men, and the other one is related to attitudes towards lesbians. These two sub-scales are forming an integral 13 item-scale which is rated on a 5 point Likert-type scale. The purpose of this scale is to detect and measure the level of homo-negativity (i.e. negative attitudes towards gay people) principally among the heterosexual population. As a validated and reliable psychometric tool, Modern Homonegativity Scale is mainly developed to explore cases of discrimination toward gay men and lesbians.

Table 7. *The Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS)*

ITEMS
1. Many gay men and lesbians use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges
2. Gay men and lesbians seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals and ignore the ways in which they are the same
3. Gay men and lesbians do not have all the rights they need
4. The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous
5. The media devote far too much attention to the topic of homosexuality
6. Celebrations such as “Gay Pride Day” are ridiculous because they assume that an individual’s sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride
7. Gay men and lesbians should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people’s throats
8. Gay men and lesbians still need to protest for equal rights
9. If gay men and lesbians want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture
10. Gay men and lesbians who are “out of the closet” should be admired for their courage
11. Gay men and lesbians should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and simply get on with their lives
12. In today’s tough economic times, American’s tax dollars shouldn’t be used to support gay and lesbian organizations
13. Gay men and lesbians have become too confrontational in their demand for equal rights

Source: Morrison and Morrison (2002).

In conclusion, as it has been presented, we might notice that all the aspects of homophobia that we explained are actually very tightly related to a broader construct substantially underlying the concept of homophobia. It is attitudes. What are attitudes? What is their function? What are they made of? Are they emotional or cognitive constructs? Are they stable or they can be changed? If they can be changed, how they are changed? What are the mechanisms influencing the attitude change? What are the theories explaining attitude change? As being vital, we will attempt to answer to all these questions in the following chapters of our research.

2.6 Attitudes

2.6.1 Defining attitudes

The use of the term attitude in theoretical, scientific explanations, as well as in everyday speech, is quite broad. Given that we live in a complex social world, encircled by different phenomena and exposed to a multitude of influences, we logically form our attitudes whenever facing a certain object or phenomenon.

In that sense, for one of the pioneers Allport (1935), attitudes are “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (p. 810).

However, as the world around us changes, all of us (in our own way), are sensitive to these changes. If attitudes are “likes and dislikes” (Bem, 1970, p.14), we certainly form them trying to keep up with the world and overcome changes we face with. Attitudes, thus, represent the acquired disposition of positive or negative relation (cognitive, emotional, and action) toward people and events.

Attitudes are, as some researchers remind (Havelka, 1998; Krneta, 2005), formed and changed in the process of socialization, since they are based on the experience of an individual in relation with the social environment. For others, (Cunningham, 2007; Hogg &Vaughan, 2005), attitudes are a relatively permanent and stable organization of “beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies related to the socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols” (p.150).

Attitudes may be recognized as “a capacity for a positive or negative evaluation of objects” that people perceive as socially and personally significant. In that sense, they are a key part of structure that defines and shapes the social behavior of people (Havelka, 1998, p. 7).

According to Rot (2009, p. 56), attitudes as psychological constructs, appear in relation to all objects, and they can be related to individuals or social groups (the attitude to a national minority), social phenomena (the attitudes towards a gay marriage), events (the attitude towards the political choices), physical objects (the attitude towards the new model of phone), abstract concepts (the attitude to the old age). If we take a chronological guideline we will find the following attitude representations:

Rokeach (1968) describes attitudes as a learned enduring orientation, or disposition, towards an object or situation, which provides a tendency to respond favorably or unfavourably to the object or situation (p. 112).

Similarily, Hogg and Vaughan (2005) observe attitudes as "a relatively permanent organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies related to the socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols" (p.150).

Finally and perhaps the most comprising is the attitude conceptualization of Eagly and Cheikan (1993) who identify attitudes as “a mental tendency, expressed by assessing a particular object with some extent of favor or disfavor” (p. 2).

In summary, as we can see from the above definitions, the common points of attitudes are that:

1) Attitudes are acquired and relatively permanent and stable psychological constructs.
2) Attitudes have great importance for human interaction.
3) Attitudes cannot be observed directly.
4) Attitudes are complex.
5) Attitudes are related to physical objects, abstract concepts, individuals, social groups and social phenomena. For that reason attitudes usually involve general evaluation of people, objects and events, which can be based on the emotions, beliefs and previous experiences and behaviours.

Thus, attitudes, as we shall see have many important functions for individuals. The cognitive function of attitude is reflected in the fact that attitudes manage, organize and simplify information elaboration; utilitarian function is referring to that positive or negative attitude shows if we can expect from certain object award or punishment, which makes us possible to plan our behavior in order to maximize awards and minimize punishments; through the function of social identity, attitudes make possible expressing individual values and identification with certain groups; finally attitudes serve in conserving self-respect with making possible to individual to apart from negative objects and connect to positive objects (Bohner et al. 2008).

2.6.2 Nature and structure of attitudes

According to Rot (2008), attitudes can be divided in two principal categories: *Personal* and *Social attitudes*.

Personal attitudes have as object a person or phenomenon that purely has the personal importance for the individual (attitude toward parents, child, and the attitude towards the question how to use their free time). The study of such attitudes is important for psychology of personality.

In contrast, *social attitudes* are common to many people. They have as an object general social phenomena (including community groups) or issues of social importance (the attitude towards politics, religion, nationality, immigrants, gay people, people with HIV, smoking).

Thus, social attitudes enable the efficient explanation of the human behaviour, through them, we can determine what kind of relationship an individual has toward certain objects and phenomena, and to what extent he is willing to enter into a certain relationship and invest himself.

On the other hand, according to various authors (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Hogg & Vaughan 2005; Schau, Stevens, Dauphinee & Del Vecchio, 1995), attitudes consist of three components:

a) *Cognitive component* relates to the objective knowledge or subjective beliefs about the attitude's object and includes processes such as perception, knowledge and evaluation of the attitude's object.

b) *Affective (emotional) component* includes all the feelings that are related to the object of attitude - positive or negative emotional relationship, followed by appropriate physiological processes. Emotional saturation gives emphasized strength and stability to the attitude.

c) *Behavioural component* refers to the intention and ability to act according to the object of the attitude, to support, help and protect, or to avoid, disable or attack the object of attitude.

In addition, Pennington (1986) observes that cognitive and affective components are structured in such a way that the beliefs and values (cognitive and affective) combine forming an attitude, which is a negative or positive evaluation of something about which we hold certain beliefs.

Finally, behavioural component as a result of cognitive and affective components can be highly visible in situations when, for example we have extreme negative attitudes toward one particular person, social group or nation. These two components gain strength and willingness to undertake the hostile action against objects of our negative attitude (Secord & Backman, 1964).

2.6.3 Functions of attitudes

According to the functional approach (James, 1980; Katz, 1960; Schaster, Gilbert & Wegner, 2011), some attitudes are a reflection of the personal experience of an individual, while others refer to the social concepts and phenomena, which make them suitable for the study of differences among individuals.

Recognizing the importance of attitudes in a daily life of an individual, Holland, et al., (2002), make a note of various attitudinal functions. Firstly, attitudes affect perception, learning and memory. If learning and memorizing of different contents is consistent with our attitudes, we are more likely to adopt and remember easily new information. Furthermore, our selective perception is also determined by our attitudes, especially if the perception itself is congruent with our existing attitudes.

Thus, attitude may have a protective function, given that our negative attitudes toward a person or social group help us preserve or enhance our self-esteem.

In general, summing up observations proposed by Katz (1960) and other recent researches (Brandt & Wetherell, 2012; Carlson, 2010; Holland, et al., 2002; Whitley & Kite, 2010); social psychology identifies four principal functions of attitudes:

1) *Instrumental or utilitarian function* reflects in a capacity of the attitudes to enable a person achieving the desired goal and avoid the unpleasant situations. As a result, people create and maintain such attitudes that can enable them meet their needs, including social needs, social acceptance, support and social prestige (Holland, et al., 2002).

As some researches suggest, this function is noticeable when people adopt attitudes that are gratifying and helping them gain benefits and avoid punishment (Katz, 1960; Holland, 2002; Whitley & Kite, 2010). In other words, any attitude that is adopted in a person's own self-interest is considered to meet a utilitarian function.

2) *Cognitive function*: refers to the information that a person has about physical and social world. In other words, every person (Brandt & Wetherell, 2012) tends to have a coherent and organized conception of the surrounding world and its objects.

3) *Self expressive function*: represents the awareness of what we feel, what we are, what we believe and what is important to us.

4) *Ego defensive* function: helps us defending ourselves from any potential truth or information that could harm our self-esteem. This function defends us from other people, as well as from ourselves.

Finally, Whitley (2010) emphasizes that the ego-defensive function correlates with Festinger's Comparison Theory (1954) suggesting that we are more likely to address the ego-defensive function when we are in a state of disappointment or hardship, than when we find ourselves in moments of well-being.

2.6.4 Prejudices, stereotypes and social distance as cognitive components of attitudes

In order to approach more profoundly the nature of attitudes it will be necessary to observe the dynamic correlation between prejudices, stereotypes and social distance as pertaining constructs tightly related to attitudes (Penington, 1997; Puhalo 2013; Snyder & Miene, 1994; Tajfel, 1970).

More specifically, stereotypes are foundation of prejudices and prejudices determine social distance. Thus, Rot (2009) argues that all these three constructs are inevitably associated with attitudes as the most common topic of research within the field of social psychology.

2.6.5 Prejudices

In a broad sense, prejudices are ideas, thoughts and conceptions of an individual that are neither supported by facts nor based on arguments. They are usually made without any kind of verification of their reliability (Puhalo, 2013). In addition, prejudices may be observed also as unreasonable, excessively generalized and logically unfounded opinions, accompanied by intense emotions, which are constantly maintained and are resistant to change (Snyder & Miene, 1994).

According to some social psychologists (Opacic & Vujadinovic, 2011; Rot, 2009; Snyder & Miene, 1994), prejudices are structurally very similar to attitudes, which reflect in three basic facts.

1) Prejudices are based on social categorization, social perception and classification of individuals into groups (Snyder & Miene, 1994).

2) Prejudices contain, though not equally developed, all three components of attitudes: a) cognitive (comprising most often wrong or simplistic beliefs about certain groups), b) behavioural (which is usually reflected in the discrimination of groups of others and / or distancing from them (this measure most often refers to the concept of social distance) and the c) emotional component, as a decisive factor in formation of negative attitude. In contrast, positive prejudices are very uncommon. Recognizing that prejudices are usually negative attitudes towards something or someone, (including hostile feelings and actions based on them), prejudices easily can be seen as "pathological attitudes" (Opacic & Vujadinovic, 2011).

3) Similarly to attitudes, prejudices are resistant to changes. Given that they are based on cognitive elements, prejudices are relatively permanent mental dispositions (Rot, 2009).

2.6.6 Source of the prejudices

Discussing on the possible sources of prejudices Pennington (1997) identifies three approaches that could explain their origin:

1) *Individual approach*

2) *Interpersonal approach*

3) *Intergroup approach*

Even though there are different types of personalities, *the individual approach* is based on the idea that the source of all prejudices is in the emotional dynamics of the individual. In line with this, the prejudice can be explained as a frustration that is imminent to all human beings (Berkowitz, 1969). Frustrated *individual prejudices* are the result of our incapacity to satisfy some of our needs and achieve personal goals and interests (Siber, 1998).

Personal weakness of an individual consequently causes frustration and dissatisfaction. As a result, these frustrated prejudices “are most commonly revealed in our attitudes towards members of other ethnic or minority groups” (Puhalo, 2013, p.76).

As a support Altemeyer (1988) considers that the aggression and hostility caused by frustration, in fact, reflects a global experience of the world as a dangerous and threatening place.

According to *individual approach*, the frustrated prejudices should be understood as a fulfillment of an aggressive and hostile instinct towards other individuals or other groups (Penington, 1997). The individual frustrations with aggressive impulses are usually being moved to another minority group that cannot fight back (Puhalo, 2013).

Hyman and Sheatsley, (1954) however, consider that the explanation for the prejudices towards other group should not be searched in characteristics of those groups that prejudices are directed to, but in a general disposition of the person expressing prejudices.

In accordance with this view Allport (1954) seeks origins of prejudices in a poor psychological state of an individual, which is manifested in anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem and general neuroticism. All these factors according to Allport (1954) can make a person susceptible to prejudice.

Interpersonal approach suggests that different beliefs about some important social issues have more significant influence on creation of certain prejudices than racial or ethnic affiliation (Penington, 1997).

In that sense, *interpersonal* prejudices are principally transmitted through our socialization with other people. We usually adopt these prejudices without any criticism in our childhood. Later, we tend to confirm their "truthfulness" in contact with "others" (Puhalo, 2013, p.75).

On the other hand, in view of *interpersonal approach*, we must not forget the *conformity* to dominant values and social norms as pertaining components of prejudices. *Conformity* as a source of prejudices imply acceptance of those attitudes that are prevailing at the certain moment. Conformity in this context means that we accept some attitudes not because we believe that they are truthful and correct, but we do that for ourselves and for the protection of our own status (Siber, 1998, p.25). Depending on the social context people accept or reject some determined social values without understanding or questioning them in their totality (Rokich, 1968).

Intergroup approach holds a view that only membership in certain social group may be a cause and contribute to the emergence and development of prejudice. Sherif (1966) indicates that intergroup competition leads to a change in the perception of “our group” and “their group”, creating in that way prejudices and conflict.

In contrast, Tajfel (1970) points out that regardless of any inter-group competitions, some social groups may show prejudices and discrimination toward other social groups through social categorization. The social categorization finally leads to social discrimination and different negative perceptions of members of other groups.

Intergroup approach can be also explained through Tajfel’s (1982) *Social identity theory*, suggesting that principal function of identification with certain group is the glorification of "us". Therefore, the identification with the group has the function of raising personal self-esteem of “us” through humiliation and stigma of "them” (Opacic, 2009).

Similarly, Jahoda (1960) explains that prejudices are, in fact, ego-defenses that protect our ego from the upcoming and threatening anxiety or pathological impulses.

In light of *intergroup approach*, we can conclude that prejudices are a mere ego defense system of an individual within a social group contrasted to another. According to Rot (2009), our racial and ethnic prejudices are usually negatively directed towards certain socially marginal, minority and non-protected groups such as: disabled persons, gay people, HIV-positive, women, the elderly, children, etc.

2.6.7 Stereotypes

Another important concept related to the social perception of a certain group is stereotype as a construct tightly related to attitudes. Stereotypes are usually defined as a cognitive component of the prejudice (Allport, 1954; Secord & Backman, 1974; Tajfel, 1981). A stereotype as a term was originally introduced to the social sciences by Lippmann (1922), who defined them as “pictures in the head or mental reproductions of reality” formed basing on the cultural influences and everyday experiences in the environment in which people live (p.16).

The stereotypes that we hold about other social, minority or ethnic groups, distort truth, deforming real experience with prejudiced preconceptions. Focusing on the real power of stereotypes, Lippmann (1922) reminds that, “in a vast majority of the situation we do not first see, and then define. Quite oppositely, we define first and then see” (p. 81).

According to Opacic and Vujadinovic (2011), stereotypes serve people to evaluate various phenomena through categorization, just in order to achieve a stable and coherent image of the world. However, especially those negative stereotypes are frequently and closely associated with prejudices, whose function is justifying the hostility towards certain groups. In addition, as some studies suggest (Opacic & Vujadinovic, 2011; Puhalo, 2013), stereotypes are precipitated conclusions about the characteristics of members of certain nations. Stereotypes are usually used when such misconceptions are persistently maintained, in contrast to real facts.

In conclusion, the most common characteristics of prejudices and stereotypes are: unjustified and groundlessness, consistently maintained, emotional attitudes (mostly rigid and negative) toward other group and its members.

2.6.8 Social distance

Social distance as well as prejudices and stereotypes commonly associated with attitudes can be found in numerous fields of social sciences, and can also be related to various groups depending on their nationality, sexual orientation, various kinds of illnesses, minority groups, and incapacitated persons.

Thus, depending of the nature of social distance many researchers investigated this phenomenon in the recent social psychology literature related to ethnic and minority groups (Bogardus, 1925; Bohner, 2008; Castelli & Tomelleri, 2008; Frisby & Stivens, 2012; Gentry, 1986; Park, 1924; Sakalli & Uğurlu, 2001; Sparrow & Cretien, 1993; Weishut, 2000).

Social distance related specifically to gender studies and vulnerable groups was studied by numerous researchers (Duckitt, 2006; Feldmann & Crandall, 2007; Link, Yang, Phelan & Collins 2004; Phelan & Basow, 2007; Penn, Kohlmaier & Corrigan, 2000).

On the other hand, attitudes toward gay people viewed through the concept of social distance were studied by (Hinkelman & Haag, 2003; Phelan & Basow, 2007; Marie & Miles, 2008; Karakayali, 2009; Marie & Miles, 2009; Trebjesanin & Lalovic, 2011).

According to Ethington (1997), the term *Social distance* was introduced to the social psychology literature in the early twentieth century, with the aim of measuring the degree of understanding and socio-psychological intimacy in interpersonal and intergroup relations. As for the relation to other social groups, it is necessary to mention the American sociologist and one of the leaders of the Chicago school Robert Park (1924) who defined the concept of social distance as “the grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize pre-social and social relations generally" (p. 339).

Park (1924) explains the concept of social distance in order to examine the awareness of the racial affiliation, as a condition in which we become aware of the distance that separate, or seem to separate us from the classes and races which we do not fully understand. In this sense, the distance is a state of mind; it is an instinctive awareness of the differences. According to Park (1924), what we usually call prejudices seems to be more or less instinctive and spontaneous disposition to maintain social distance.

For Bogardus (1925) social distance between two social groups, implies the level of preference of the representatives of one group towards the other group as partners in interpersonal communication, and their willingness to make contact with the members of the specific ethnic groups.

In addition, Bogardus (1947) in his posterior work indicates that the term *social distance* includes "level of understanding and psychological closeness or distance in relation to different individuals or groups, and it is examined as a willingness to establish a relationship of different closeness." (p. 56).

It might be interesting to note that Bogardus’s conceptualization of *social distance* is not the only. Some sociologists (Karakayali, 2009; Parrillo & Donoghue, 2005) enhanced that *social distance* can also be conceptualized on the basis of other parameters such as the frequency of interaction between different groups or the normative distinctions such as “insiders” or “outsiders”.

Thus as we can see, social distance indicates the degree of understanding and feelings that people express to each other. *Social distance* reflects the nature of their interaction, the character of social relations and frequency of their interactions.

Also, all the above definitions of social distance show a high degree of similarity, and in brief, they come down to the following: “social distance is the degree of intimacy to which a person agrees to enter into in relations with other individuals or social groups*”* (Milosavljevic, 2005, p.176).

2.6.9 Theoretical approaches to attitudes

European and especially American social and cognitive psychology are more than 50 years treating the question of changing the attitudes in different terminological variations: persuasive processes, techniques of persuasion, elaboration of persuasive messages. This chapter is an attempt of a synthesis of the principal theoretical approaches, and even more the review of research findings accumulated in the last fifty years, with particular reference to the most recent influential theories.

Over the years, the conception of attitude has been investigated in a number of ways throughout numerous perspectives. Attitude studies have been materialized as a major component of the social sciences during the first part of the twentieth century, paying attention primarily on pertaining components such as instruments enabling measurement of attitudes (Bogardus, 1925, 1947; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Likert, 1932; Thurstone, 1928).

Attitudes are being as vital and prevailing subject of interest in modern social psychology, given that in the period from 2000 up to present days, it has been noted an evident interest for the attitude structure and attitude change (Bohner & Dickel, 2011; Crano & Prislin, 2006; Fazio & Olson, 2003).

Specifically in the recent period, the attitude structuring conception was a subject of interest for various researchers (Bond & Fox, 2007; Costello & Osborne, 2005; Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Fabrigar et al., 2005; Gawronski, 2007).

For that reason, other researchers focus on attitudes and their influence on behaviour trying to find a link between them (Bohner & Dickel, 2011; Crano & Prislin, 2006; Fazio & Olson, 2003; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002, 2005; Igartua, 2011; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Wood, 2000).

Since the attitudes are not innate (Martin, Sexton, Franklin, Gerlovich & McElroy, 2009), but acquired behavioural dispositions, not only do they find as a subject a wide range of applications, but even more the research of attitudes has became the great industry (Krech, Chrutcfield & Ballachey, 1962).

Finally, guided by the knowledge on the attitudes towards certain objects and phenomena, we may (although uncertainly and incompletely) predict human behaviour. The attitudes are particularly suitable for explaining and forecasting behaviours related to the important social issues and phenomena.

2.6.10 Measuring of attitudes

The concept of attitude measuring is essential for defining what the people's attitudes are and whether or not they change. In that context, Petty and Cacioppo (1981), propose distinction between direct and indirect measurement of attitudes.

Precisely for the reason of the different approaches in evaluation of attitudes, indirect approach is also known as *implicit measurement* of attitudes, whereas direct approach is referred to as *explicit measurement* of attitudes.

Scales created to measure directly the connotative meaning of objects, concepts or events are the Likert scale (Likert, 1932), Osgood's scale from 1957 known as the semantic differential scale (Osgood, 1957), and The Thurstone scale (Thurstone, 1928).

In contrast, indirect attitude measures, on the other hand, are those where individuals are not directly requested to report their attitudes. Instead, the attitudes are measured upon judgments, reactions, or behaviours of respondents (Rot, 2009). Some of the well known indirect attitude measuring techniques and methods are the *Thematic Apperception Test*, (TAT) designed by Proshansky (1943), *Implicit Association* Test (IAT) created by Wheeler and Greenwald (1998), *Automatic Evaluation Task* (Fazio et al.,1996) and Physiological measures such as the facial electromyography (Cacioppo & Petty,1979).

The principal and substantial difference between measuring attitudes directly or indirectly rests in the extent to which the respondent is conscious of the fact that his attitudes are being measured. Another fundamental difference between direct and indirect measurement of attitudes is the extent to which the respondents are allowed to give conscious answers (Wheeler & Greenwald, 1998; Zezelj, 2005), given the fact that the respondents of direct measurements are given some time to think about their attitudes concerning the object of the attitude, while indirect measurement is fundamentally based on respondents spontaneous and unconscious evaluations. Precisely for the reason of different approach in evaluation of attitudes, indirect approach is also known as implicit measurement of attitudes, whereas direct approach is referred to as explicit measurement of attitudes.

2.6.11 Measuring of explicit attitudes

Taking into account that social distance is co-native component of attitude toward homosexuals (Bogardus, 1925), and given the fact that the central subject of the present study is attitude change, perhaps the most appropriate way to explain measurement of attitudes should be through the concept of Social distance.

Measuring of attitudes through social distance is based on the idea that different social relations involve different levels of emotional closeness or distance, and consequently, the acceptance of certain relationship with an abstract person, or a member of certain groups. Measuring of attitudes is the reflection of general attitude of an individual towards certain social groups.

First attempts of practical implementation and measurement of this concept have been made by the American sociologist E. Bogardus in the 20-ies of the last century, the study of racial and ethnic attitudes.

Bogardus (1925, 1947), therefore, searching for relevant indicators about the state of relations and mutual evaluation of social groups, started from the assumption that real life situations were in certain hierarchical relation in terms of closeness and meaning of social contact which members of different social groups could meet with. The items in the Bogardus social distance scale are "adequate interpretations and gradations" of that feeling of intimacy (Bogardus, 1925, p.5).

The items in the scale are hierarchically arranged from the smallest degree of social distance (acceptance of other members of the group as a spouse) up to a maximum distance (the inability of common living in the same country).

The original version of the scale comprises the following relations:

Table 8. *Bogardus Scale of Social Distance*

Items
1. Close relationship by marriage,
2. Membership in the same club as a sign of close friendship,
3. Neighborhood, living in the same street,
4. Co-workers in the same occupation,
5. Citizenship (resident of a state),
6. Only visitor in one’s country, and
7. Exclusion from the country.

Source: Bogardus (1925)

The items are formulated in the form of questions to be answered with "yes" or "no". The measure of social distance is maximum degree of closeness acceptable to the respondent in relation to a member of that group (thereby, greater closeness implies smaller distance).

On the other hand, Likert (1932) created a standard of evaluating attitudes by asking respondents to answer to a certain number of sentences about a specific subject. Likert Scale is a five point scale designed to allow the respondent express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement.

Table 9. *Likert Scale*

Items	scale				
Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The hotel I wanted was easy to find					
2. The hotel was cheap					
3.The hotel satisfied my needs					
4. I was happy with my hotel					

Source: Likert (1932)

According to McLeod (2008), Likert scale suggests that the strength or, intensity of experience is linear. Using a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree, Likert (1932) holds a view that attitudes can be measured by offering to respondents a choice of five to seven or even nine pre-coded responses with one neutral point suggesting that respondent neither agrees nor disagrees.

As we analyzed some principal definitional and theoretical questions related to the attitude as a cognitive and emotional construct, in the following chapters we will consequently address a question of attitude change process. First of all, we should define what attitude change is.

2.7 Attitude change

2.7.1 Defining attitude change

If we take into account approach of Petty and Wegener (1998), the attitude change simply indicates that the value which is attributed to the attitude object is changed. The change is estimated relatively referring to the initial attitude, and can happen in two ways: *polarization* defined as growth of the intensity of the attitude to the one of two extreme: (positive or negative) and *depolarization* as a reduction of the attitude's intensity to zero, neutral point (p.2).

Although it sounds as a paradox, explanation of the attitude change emphasizes that the process of change is basically the same as the process of attitude's formation. Attitude's continuum is, in fact, determined by zero point (no-attitude or the absence of attitude), and every movement on that continuum (either from zero to a certain position of the intensity or change of intensity and/or direction) is qualitatively the same process (Fazio, 1986).

Generally, attitude change methods and procedures are considered effective to the degree that they modify either a person's self-report of attitudes or the attitude evaluated with a more indirect or implicit measures (Zezelj, 2005).

Finally, Wood (2000) establishes typologies explaining that attitude change can be motivated by normative concerns with different aims: " (a) ensuring the coherence and favourable evaluation of the self, and (b) ensuring satisfactory relations with others given the rewards/punishments they can provide, along with an informational concern for (c) understanding the entity or issue featured in influence appeals" (p. 541).

2.7.2 Attitude change as a result of persuasion

In order to explain attitude change through persuasion, there should be taken into consideration the fact that there are a variety of correlated conceptions that partly cover the notion of persuasion in certain ways and differ from it in other ways. So as to fully comprehend what persuasion is, we will approach this question within its principal variations and subjects of interest.

Particularly for that reason, it is convenient to define and explain the persuasion as well as factors influencing persuasion.

According to Anderson (1971) persuasion is “a communication process in which the communicator seeks to elicit a desired response from his receivers” (p. 7).

Bettinghaus and Cody (1987) see persuasion as “a conscious attempt by one individual to change the attitudes, beliefs or behaviour of another individual or group of individuals through the transmission of some message” (p. 4).

On the other hand, Smith (1982) considers persuasion as “a symbolic activity whose purpose is to effect the internalization or voluntary acceptance of new cognitive states or patterns of overt behaviour through the exchange of messages" (p. 8).

What's more, O'Keefe (2002) explains persuasion as a successful intended attempt at influencing another's psychological condition throughout communication in a circumstance in which the recipient has some measure of freedom.

Persuasion according to Gass and Seiter (2003) is a positive and potent social force. It is applied in various circumstances in order to accomplish many different results.

As it will be presented in the following chapters, a number of researchers find evidence that narratives can persuade, suggesting that narratives can impact both attitudes and behaviours (Bussele & Bilandzic, 2009; Cacioppo & Petty 1981; Cohen 2006; Gass & Seiter 2006; Green & Brock 2000; Igartua & Paez, 1998; Laswell, 1948).

Given that experiences obtained through narrative fiction are processed much like real-life personal experiences, persuasion has the potential power to shape and change real-world beliefs and attitudes (Mar et al., 2006), narrative fiction can significantly encourage a form of creative reasoning and feeling that others, even different, are important part of a global social development (Schiappa, Gregg & Hewes, 2005). In a political context, persuasion helps create peace agreements between two countries and helps open up closed societies towards immigrants (Igartua et al., 2011).

Similarly, in political advertising, the focus of persuasion is not to lose the loyal voters, but to reinforce the support of citizens with a favorable attitude toward a certain politician. The role of persuasion in political campaigns, according to Ramos (2012) is also to influence the attitudes of those who are willing to vote for another candidate. As a result, a political campaign based on persuasion tends to capture the attention of undecided citizens, emphasizing the personal qualities of the political candidate.

Researches on narrative persuasion also found evidences on its key role in reducing stigmatization of various vulnerable groups (Eisenberg, 2005; Keen, 2006). Persuasion through micro videos is also frequently used in AIDS prevention campaigns as an alternative to traditional ways of health promotion messages (Backer, Rogers & Sopory 1992). Persuasion convinces drivers to fasten up their seat belts when driving or to avoid driving when they have had too much to drink.

Furthermore, Moyer-Guse and Nabi (2010) confirm that narratives reduce resistance, thus increasing persuasion of narratives. Dunlop et al., (2010) indicate that greater levels of narrative persuasion are associated with greater intention to quit smoking for smokers exposed to short narratives. Similarly, using written text with persuasive messages Kim et al., (2012) find that smokers reading articles with strong anti-tobacco persuasive arguments, implying personal experiences of smokers, experienced greater levels of persuasion than those who red news articles without persuasive messages.

Persuasion helps to students to remain in school and complete their education. Persuasion is commonly used in the healthy living campaigns to convince an alcoholic or drug addict family member to try to find professional help (Igartua, 2011).

Persuasion creates mechanisms for warning pregnant women concerning the dangers of drinking or taking drugs during pregnancy. Persuasion helps encourage elderly persons to seek preventative medical care, such as regular breast screenings, or lung ex ray-examinations. Persuasion is one of the strategies used by managers to promote tolerance and respect among employees in the workplace. Persuasion is how the trainer of a badly playing team motivates the players to do their best in order to win.

One fundamental quality of persuasion is that it is always a conscious activity (Reardon, 1991). In theory, one may not unintentionally convince another human being in something, since the act of persuasion engage conscious intention.

However, it is argued (Gass & Seiter, 2006) that in delicate situations where persuasion takes place, it is possible for influence attempts to happen without any conscious awareness of the persuader. This could be the case when the parents try to model behaviour of their children. They may not recognize how much of what they say and do is adopted by their kids.

In order to summarise the concept of persuasion we will notice that according to Gass and Seiter (2003) very little of what we see in this world can be achieved without persuasion, given the fact that “persuasion involves one or more persons who are involved in the activity of creating, reinforcing, modifying or extinguishing beliefs, attitudes or behaviours within the constraints of a given communication context” (p. 39).

2.7.3 Persuasion viewed through early attitude theories

Viewed from the perspective of cognitive dissonance, the attitude change can happen as the consequence of certain behavior. According to Festinger (1957), cognitive dissonance is existence of disharmonized relationships between individual cognitions of an individual, his knowledge (information, opinions, and beliefs) about himself and his own environment.

This theory is one of cognitive consistence theoretical concepts whose basic postulation is that people are trying to achieve a greater harmony and the smallest disharmony between their different thoughts, behaviors and attitudes (Zezelj, 2005).

Thus, attitude change, according to Festinger (1957) is usually achieved if a person has two different cognitions that are mutually inconsistent. The person, with two confronted cognitions will experience stress, or anxiety of an unpleasant motivational condition defined as cognitive dissonance. A pressure felt by that person will be dissipated by eliminating one of the two dissonant cognitions (Bem, 1967; Bohner, 2003).

Festinger & Carlsmith (1959) introduce four situations that can lead to attitude change. Firstly, attitude change can be reached by logical non consistence between two cognitions, when the contrast of first cognition comes from the other cognition based up on rules of logical reasoning. For example, it would be logically inconsistent to claim that there are not any clouds in the sky, but it is raining. Secondly, cultural customs often determine what is consonant or dissonant. For that reason in some cultures, for example, obesity would be dissonant to woman’s attractiveness, and in others it would not. Thirdly, attitude change can appear because of non consistency between the definitions of different extents. That happens when first cognition is involved in other, more general. For example, being a student who does not pass exams should be dissonant, because the part of being student is passing the exams. Finally, attitude change can appear as the consequence of non consistency of certain cognition with previous experience. For example, based on our previous knowledge, all objects dropped from our hands, fall down to the floor. When in some situation that would not happen, it would be dissonant to our previous experience.

When the person's behavior is not in accordance with his attitudes and beliefs, would probably lead to attitude change through cognitive dissonance. For example, a person who smokes, and is aware that smoking is damaging, can be found in the case of cognitive dissonance, because smoking and cognition that smoking is damaging are mutually dissonant.

Interestingly, if we consider that cognitive dissonance is psychologically negative state, in which a person would be motivated to reduce the dissonance between two contrasted cognitions (Olson & Stone, 2005), in other cases the same person would be more likely to compare new cognitions with his previous cognitions which can be perceived as *cognitive response.*

2.7.4 Persuasion viewed through the Theory of Cognitive Response

According to Petty, Ostrom and Brock (1982), *a cognitive response* represents "a collection of all the thoughts that appear before the communication, during the communication, as so during the afterthoughts about the content of the communication" (p. 25).

The theory of cognitive response suggests that whenever a recipient receives a persuasive message, he compares it with his previous knowledge, feelings and attitudes prior to the subject matter, creating, thus, cognitive responses (McGuire, 1972; Smith, 1968). If thoughts are going in the direction indicated by the message, persuasion takes place, whereas if they go in the opposite direction, there is no persuasion, or may even be a boomerang effect (Brock, 1967; Cook, 1969).

In other words, the cognitive response theory basically suggests that a cognitive response influences final attitude and for that reason may have an effect on behaviour.

Furthermore, a cognitive response is a variable which intervenes between the content of persuasive communication and the attitude analogically to the way that attitude intervenes between the communication and noticed behaviour.

After being exposed to a message, a cognitive response, according to Greenwald (1968) has to do with the way the recipient of the communication manipulates, elaborates and integrates the information. Cognitive response thus is a variable which intervenes between the content of the message and the attitude analogically to the way that attitude intervenes between the communication and noticed behaviour.

As Greenwald (1968) explains, when the recipients are exposed to certain information, they transmit it to pre-existing thoughts that they already had regarding the subject. Recipients are of course more likely to be influenced by messages to which they have previously have thought positively. Therefore, the cognitive response model attempts to comprehend the relationship between the primary response to the message and the attitude change as a result of the message.

Finally, as it has been presented, a common point of these early theories was their emphasis on the stimulus characteristics such as: source, message, channel and receiver of the message. Under these assumptions we will explain some of these factors that according to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) were considered as crucial concepts in persuasion.

2.7.5 Factors influencing persuasion

As we set up a definition of persuasion, we will now try to identify some specific factors responsible for the process of persuasion in view of early attitude theories.

In this respect, we address Laswell (1948) who suggests that for comprehension and anticipation of the effectiveness of one person's attempt to change the attitude and behaviour of another target person, it is necessary to know "who says what to whom and with what effect" (p.117).

Upgrading Laswell's approach, Hovland and Janis (1959) enhance that the factors that should be certainly paid attention to are as follows: the source of the persuasive communication; the message itself; the recipient of the message or audience and the situation or context. Therefore, according to Hovland and Janis (1959) any persuasive communication will have particular target recipients in such a way that the source should be chosen to have the desired effect on that recipient.

Almost 20 years later, the fundamental nature of a persuasive communication is explained and developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) in their *theory of reasoned action* (TRA) where they suggest that the majority of persuasive attempts provide individuals with information that is expected to induce the recipient to behave in the desired way. This explanation of Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) implies that there are two essential points that make a persuasive communication: *the information* transmitted by the communicated message, and *an inducement* or persuasion. As a final result, a persuasive message must provoke a change in attitude of the recipient.

On the other hand, McGuire (1985) considers that a message is the central figure of the persuasion process, pointing out the importance of the message to be understood in order to be accepted and absorbed, which consequently will influence the recipient's judgment and future behavior. With regard to a persuasive message as a central figure, its originality, novelty, and aesthetic pleasure are essential as the first step toward persuasion.

As it has been suggested before, crucial factors in understanding persuasion are:1) the source of the communication, (whether the source is trustworthy or attractive), 2) the structure of the message (whether the message is affirmative or negative; whether the message is simple or two-sided) and 3) the recipient of the message (whether the recipient is active or passive).. Basing upon the suggested scheme (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981; Gross, 1992; Laswel, 1948; O'Keefe, 2002,) we will explain some important aspects of these three components.

2.7.6 Status and credibility of the source

There are different ideas of what makes a source credible, but most authors have coincided that *expertise* and *credibility* are central qualities of a communicator who wants to be recognised as credible. The early studies of the persuasive communication (Petty & Cacciopo, 1986) suggest that credible sources have more effect on the final outcome of the process of persuasion when the involvement of the recipients of the message is low.

On the other hand, Gross (1992) observes that "in general the more expert the source, the more likely we are to be persuaded" (p. 555).

In addition Hovland and Weiss earlier (1951) came to conclusion that American students were more persuaded of the truth of a publication on the most recent medications when the source was a medical journal, then when it was stated by an ordinary magazine. However, when the students were tested one month later, the original differences between these two different sources had been significantly decreased.

In contrast, Hovland and Weiss (1951) suggested that the identity of the source becomes disconnected from the message over certain time and actually the important part of the persuasive communication is becoming the content and not the source, being the source credible or not.

Nevertheless, having discovered these patterns in relation to the characteristics of the source, the research paradigm achieved even a greater complexity. Thus, Chaiken, Eagly and Wood, (1996), complement these findings by explaining that credibility of the source of information has a greater impact if the recipients of information are personally interested in the content of the information. In other words if the subjects are highly involved, the credibility of the source will be more significant.

2.7.7 Attractiveness of the source

According to Gross (1992), a communicator who is attractive, entertaining, charismatic and has a pleasant way of speaking and generally communicating with other persons, is more persuasive than one who does not have these skills and values. An unattractive or unlikeable communicator might produce a quite opposite effect from what is desired, since the audience responds by adopting attitudes which are contrary to those being advocated. For that reason, politicians all over the world dedicate significant effort to transmit their personal message to their voters.

In addition, Cialdini (2001) notes that physical attractiveness is a positive quality that controls the way we see another person. Unconsciously, people take for granted that attractive people have such qualities as talent, kindness, honesty, and intelligence.

Even more, according to Cialdini (2001) "physically attractive people are more often helped, and are more likely to persuade us, and these benefits are conferred beginning from an early stage in elementary schools" (p.173).

In that very context, Chaiken (1979) carried out a study where the messages concerned not serving meat at breakfast and lunch in university dining facilities. He found that people who were physically attractive persuaders achieved significantly greater persuasion than unattractive persuaders.

2.7.8 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the communicator is related to the perceived intentions and motives of the communicator. For instance, according to Zezelj (2005) the trustworthiness of British and American political leaders was questioned over their resolution to initiate the war in Afghanistan. The motives were recognized by the citizens as the interests of the government rather than the country.

As a component of trustworthiness, a self interest of the source can be regarded as important, too. A communicator who promotes a message which is opposing to his own self-interest can also be very successful (O'Keefe, 2002).

2.7.9 Non-verbal behaviour

According to Abelsen and Zimbado (1970), nonverbal communication is a constant subtext of everything we do, neither can we stop showing facial expressions or posture, tone of voice or hide something. If we make mistakes in choosing the emotional messages, we will be rejected. This knowledge emphasizes how the social skills are essential for perception, interpretation and responses to emotional and interpersonal signals.

In addition, Lapakko (1997) suggests that non-verbal communication is the process of using wordless messages to generate meaning. It's of great importance to adopt the unspoken rules of social harmony, which is a function to allow everyone to participate in social interaction to feel comfortable, given that discomfort provokes anxiety. People who do not have these skills are perceived as incompetent, not just when it comes to polite conversation, but also in dealing with their emotions.

Zezelj et al., (2007) summarize that non-verbal communication skills are necessary ingredients of charm and social success. People who make a great impact within a society are skilled in monitoring their own expressions of emotion and are capable of empathizing with others, therefore, are socially successful.

2.7.10 Message structure

McGuire (1968) considers that implicit messages sometimes are more likely to be effective if the recipient is able and likely to anticipate the conclusions; but for recipients of low intelligence, and/or motivation, explicit messages may be preferred.

Even if a persuasive communication is thought with a target audience in mind, this McGuire's assumption regarding the explicitness of the message is only functional if the type of recipient is well defined, as message type and recipient are closely related and depend on each other.

Degree of emotional appeal has also been proposed as an important aspect in effectiveness of a persuasive communication. Nevertheless, according to Ajzen and Fishbein

(1980) a high fear message has been found to sometimes increase persuasion, sometimes to decrease persuasion and sometimes to have the same effect as a low fear message.

These conflicting results illustrate that it is difficult to come to conclusion that different contexts give different results. The order of presentation of a message and whether the message is one-sided (i. e. only giving the argument) or two-sided (i. e. mentioning and explicitly refuting the counter argument that can give different results).

Furthermore, when the message is two-sided the order of presentation of the message has also been perceived to give contradictory results. "Discrepancies in order of presentation of the message, sometimes create less important effects, sometimes primacy effects, and sometimes there are no effects at all" (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980, p. 113).

Therefore, as a result, it seems to be evident, that the conclusions on what factor makes persuasion effective are mostly inconsistent. The answer should be probably found in an interaction between all the described factors inherent to persuasion.

2.7.11 Recent theories explaining persuasion

There are a certain number of theories that provide a framework for understanding the relationship between exposure to persuasive messages and eventual attitude change. As some of these theories are frequently used in the communication research, they will be discussed as conceptual scenery in view of attitude change. With the aim to explain attitude change, we will make a reference to three models that are most relevant for approaching attitude change: *The elaboration likelihood model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979, 1981, 1984; Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman, 1981), *the heuristic systematic model* (Chaiken, 1980, 1982, 1987; Chaiken & Eagly, 1983) and *the transportation imagery model* (Green &Brock, 2000, 2002).

2.7.12 The elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

The ELM is a theory based on hypothesis that people are bombarded constantly by persuasive messages and cannot analyze them in profoundly. Therefore, the reception of the message will directly depend on the receiver's effort, motivation and capacity to elaborate the received message. According to ELM, attitude change will be a consequence of the fact whether the receiver followed the central route of attitude change or the peripheral route. The central route is defined as stronger, more persistent and with ability to predict future behaviour (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992). On the other hand, peripheral route is weaker and less stable (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

In consequence, according to Petty and Cacioppo, (1979, 1981), ELM identifies two possible ways of persuasion: Central and peripheral.

Central: implying that the attitude change is a result of personal conscious effort to register and process all important information related to the object of attitude. Central route accounts several conditions as responsible for a successful attitude change:

1) *Recipient's motivation* includes motivational factors divided in two groups: a) personal receiver's involvement (relevance of the message for the receiver) and b) general cognitive moments (dissonance, need for cognition).

In this regard, Parrot (1995) suggests that motivation of the recipient can be improved if: a) the presentation of the contents is unusual, unfamiliar and novel (that means that the idea of introducing new formats in contrast with the classical advertising may be a worthy option); b) the presentation contains characters and narratives that are opposing to the recipient's expectations (this demonstrate the importance of character profile and the way in which the narrative is presented), and c) both external and internal aspects are used to strengthen the recipients awareness.

2) *Recipient's capacity* to process the message suggests that certain previous knowledge of the recipient. Clarity of the message and absence of disturbance are also key factors for attitude change within central processing.

The principal value of the central route is that the attitudes formed or changed through central way demonstrate more a) stability (they are long lasting), b) power (they are resistant to changes) and c) predictability of behaviour.

However, in spite of the fact that central processing is based on a detailed analysis of the arguments, is not free of prejudice. The central route can be characterized by an object or a subject. If the receiver shows a negative attitude towards the message, the result of the implementation of the central route is the generation of counterarguments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The central route is also characterized by situations of high involvement of the receiver (strong interest in the message). The central route prompts the receiver to analyze thoroughly the arguments, (semantic contents) in order to develop a cognitive response. If the arguments are perceived as strong, the receiver generates a positive relationship and is more likely to be persuaded. In contrast, if the interest in the message is weak, the attitude change will probably not be achieved.

In contrast, peripheral route characterizes the situations of weak involvement (little interest in the message, distraction, overloading information) in which receivers develop promptly a response to persuasion, depending on the presence or absence of the simple evidences. Peripheral route has a quantitative aspect (number of arguments), but also shows qualitative features of central route (Petty & Preisler 1999).

While attitude changes promoted by the central line are based on a detailed evaluation of arguments, those caused by peripheral processing are principally based on heuristic rules of immediate response (the source is expert, attractive or noticeable, the aesthetics of the message, the number of arguments, evoked figures or statistics).

Furthermore, the ELM researchers have also identified other processes that may occur in the peripheral route and have to do with classic conditioning (Cacioppo et al., 1992, Cacioppo, Priester, & Berntson, 1993; Staats & Staats, 1958) or with the continuous exposure (Zajonc & Markus, 1982).

The ability to treat the content of the message also depends on the context. Noisy environment (Petty, Wells & Brock, 1976), fast presentation of the message (Smith & Schaffer, 1991) or limited time for reading (Kruglanski & Freund, 1983) are factors that decrease the ability to engage in treatment systematic information. Distraction may also reduce the reception of a message (Maccoby & Festinger, 1964) as well as persuasive capacity of the massage and its effectiveness was (Petty, & Fabrigar, 2008).

One of the decisive factors according to Pastor and Juste (2010) is determining whether the message is processed by central or peripheral way is the personal need for cognition of the receiver. If the need for cognition of the receiver is high the message will be processed by central route, while individuals with a weak desire for cognition are likely to follow the peripheral route (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992).

2.7.13 Heuristic systematic model (HSM)

With the aim to be an improved successor of the theory of cognitive response (Festinger & Maccoby, 1964), Chaiken and Eagly (1984) introduced and explained Heuristic Systematic Model (HSM) as a model explaining processes of attitude change. The HSM is fundamentally based on the idea that most of the persuasive messages are processed through some simple ideas or rules that are learned on the basis of past experience and previous observations (Chaiken & Eagly, 1984; Havelka, 2013; Pastor et al., 2010).

In other words, the principal idea of HSM is based on belief that individuals exposed to persuasive messages, often make decisions after investing the minimal cognitive engagement in processing the message. The heuristic route of processing information is in fact, a mechanical application of judgmental rules that are earlier adopted and saved in memory of an individual (Zezelj, 2005), and activated in a communication with other people (Schwarz, 2004; Pastor, 2010).

In this context, Eagly and Chaiken (1984) suggest that according to the heuristic postulations, people do a little cognitive effort to judge the validity of a message and base their conformity on the superficial evaluation of a variety of persuasive aspects such as attractiveness of the source, trustworthiness of the source or the simplicity of the message structure. After a superficial processing of the persuasive information, individuals form or change their attitudes based on heuristics such as: "we can trust experts; the opinion of the majority is generally true; or messages with more arguments are more valid" (Pastor et al., 2010, p. 52).

The processing of persuasive message through the application of heuristics is a mechanically programmed process that can take place even when the recipients are not aware of applying heuristics. The recipients have little or no awareness of the extent and the number of times that they used heuristic route of processing the information (Eagly & Chaiken, 1984).

In summary, we can conclude that the heuristic (peripheral) route prevails in many persuasive situations given that the heuristics facilitate both, formation and change of attitude, allowing in that way cognitive function as "the principle of least cognitive effort" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

On the other hand, in situations where the recipients have a personal interest in processing the persuasive information, they are more likely to use systematic (central route) even though, the systematic route is a controlled process as requiring attention and cognitive effort of the recipient (Pastor et al., 2010; Petty, Wheeler & Tormala, 2003).

2.7.14 Transportation-Imagery-Model

From a social and principally psychological point of view, Green and Brock (2000) conceived definition of transportation while investigating the influence of short narratives on recipient's attitudes. Given that little attention was paid to clarifying specific mechanisms of their persuasive effects, Green and Brock (2000) implied that transportation was a convergent process, “where all mental systems and capacities become focused on the events occurring in the narrative” (p.701). Transportation as a concept, describing an individual mental process is actually inspired and based on the metaphor of Gerrig from 1993. In this context, Gerrig (1993) makes a reference to some traveler who “goes some distance from his world of origin, which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible. The traveler returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey” (p. 10).

Coinciding with Gerrig (1993), and implying that transportation could be also defined as a psychological journey which influences on a reader`s change, Green and Brock, (2002) suggest that *transportation* may be manifested through psychological distance from reality, loss of self-awareness, change of belief and attitude change. Furthermore, Green and Brock (2000) reveal that transported recipient becomes immersed in a narrative world and lose contact with the real world. Experiencing strong reactions to the characters and the events that occur to them, the recipient as a result, ends up abstracted from trying to counter-argue entrenched messages. Apart from escaping mentally from the real world, the recipients experience the events within the narrative world as vivid and real.

The inspiring metaphor of Gerrig also substantially correlates with Nell's (1998) feeling of losing oneself in a story, where a recipient carefully follows the narration that leads him to a different world, and at least in the short term leaves his real world.

The recipient, according to Nell (1998) reacts emotionally to events that are in fact, simple words on paper or moving images. Transported into a narrative, the recipient accepts the world of the author, and at the same time, leaves reality in the background. Without noticing someone entering the room, the recipient loses connections with his existing environment.

In accordance with that Gerrig's definition of transportation, some other authors (Green, Garst & Brook, 2004; Kaufman, 2004) suggest that feeling transported into other worlds, and abandoning our own world is not just an empty trip, because when we return from the imaginary world of fiction to real life, we are likely to return with opinions or beliefs based on what previously, of somehow we have experienced during that trip.

2.7.15 Components of transportation

Transportation is conceived as an extensive empirical condition which integrates attention, cognitive processes, imagery, and emotions (Green, 2004). Afterward, enhancing the importance of cognitive component, Green and Donahue (2009) described transportation "as a distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings focused on story events" (p.241).

In this regard, McQueen et al., (2011) suggest that process of *transportation*, with both, cognitive and emotional resources, is able to decrease counterarguing in response to arguments presented in narrative contexts.

Imagery is determined as the third component within the process of *transportation.* Imagery generates strong colorful images evoked by a given narrative and rapid strong reactions to the story (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, Strange & Brock, 2002). For example, imagery while reading a text may compensate all those aspects and scenes that remain implicit in a clearly presented narrative (Ingarden, 1973).

Thus, visual imagery component derives from the recipient's ability of the pictorial representation in the head and his tendency to allow himself to take part in the story (Green & Brock, 2000).

2.7.16 Transportation as a strong involvement

Despite the fact that *involvement* as a term might be qualified as a broader concept, according to Murphy et al., (2014), transportation and involvement, although morphologically different terms, "both describe an individual's degree of involvement with a particular narrative" (p.5).

Similarly, for Busselle and Bilandzic (2009), transportation is a special concept of involvement, in which the reader is transported into the narrative world, and there witnessed the events in the story cognitively and emotionally. Involvement is fundamentally achieved because "a complete differentiation of the media and the ideal stimulus with the affective information processing is not possible" (Bussele & Bilandzic, 2009, p. 13).

Transportation could therefore be seen as particularly strong involvement. The strong involvement also allows the change of attitude on the recipients, because "more transported recipients regardless of labeling it as fact or fiction are larger persuasion effects to observe" (Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010, p.404). Transportation causes sometimes that recipients imagine a tragic end to a story or how the narration would have been or have ended differently. In addition, the recipient returns back from his narrative journey a bit changed, indicating the attitude changing effect of transportation (Oatley, 2002).

Even more specifically, Cohen (2001) treats transportation as an extremely powerful involvement, where the recipients enter emotionally and cognitively in a story and encounters their content critically.

In this context, we can distinguish and identify the following sources of an individual degree of involvement with a particular narrative fiction:

1) Emotional involvement may be directly incentivized by the personal qualities of the characters and attraction of the narrated events that comprise the narrative world of the fiction. Such involvement may be transformed by narrative structure (Louverse, 2004), or specific narrative elements focused on moral values of the character that enables compassion and sympathy (Zilman, 1994).

2) Emotional involvement may be affected when stylistic instruments encourage appreciation of the artistic quality of the narrative (Kuiken, Miall & Sikora, 2004). According to Tal-Or and Cohen (2010), the artistic admiration may motivate continual or repetitive involvement in the narrative through repeated viewing of a film or repeated reading of a book.

3) Emotional involvement can be improved when stylistic devices such as metaphors and other artistic mechanisms capture attention and evoke feelings (Miall & Kuiken, 1994; Van Peer, 1987).

In other words, for Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) transportation takes all kinds of cognitive resources, so that the recipients can no longer perceive themselves and their environment separately. In contrast to cognitive elaboration based on reasonable and critical balancing arguments, deeply involved and transported recipients tend to reduce negative cognitive processes and avoid arguments against a narration.

2.7.17 Transportation as a model explaining persuasion

Considering that fictional narratives (stories presented in books, newspapers, TV, radio, films, plays, lyrics, etc.,) may have impact on beliefs and behavior, Green and Brock (2000, 2002) conceptualized the construct of *transportation into a narrative world*, introducing the Transportation Imagery Model (TIM), as a specific theory whose principal aim was addressing the narrative persuasion through the construct of transportation.

In consequence, psychological transportation to a narrative world is proposed to be a key mechanism responsible for affecting attitudes and beliefs (Green & Brock, 2000). As Green and Brock (2000) suggest, TIM consists of imagery language, the clarity, transportation, the craftsmanship, the preserving of the narrative format including fictional and non-fictional content and should measure narrative persuasion.

Following the same theoretical line, Green and Brock (2000, 2002) postulate that narrative transportation is limited to story text (script) which is in fact narrative (rather than rhetoric), in which images are evoked (images that can be recalled, recognized and responded to) and in which is possible to identify beliefs that are implicated for most recipients (readers, listeners or viewers).

As a result, narrative account is defined by as “a story that raises unanswered questions, presents unresolved conflicts, or depicts not yet completed activity”, which “characters may encounter and then resolve a crisis”, and where can be identified a story line, with a beginning, middle and end (p. 316). For example, Green and Brock (2000) indicate that subjects who were more transported into a narrative about a murder committed by a psychiatric patient, were also more likely to believe that psychiatric patients should have restricted freedoms and that the world was generally more violent and dangerous with psychiatric patients walking around.

Based upon suggested theoretical guidelines, we may notice that the propensity for transportation is moderated by attributes of the recipient (such as imagery and absorption aptitudes), attributes of the script (artistry and adherence to narrative format) and attributes of the context – medium, which may limit opportunity for investment in imagery, participatory responses and pacing.

Research on TIM suggests that transportation into a narrative fiction significantly predicts belief change in the direction of the narrative-relevant beliefs (Appel & Mara, 2013; Appel & Richter, 2007; Green, 2006; Green & Brock, 2000; Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Igartua & Muniz, 2008).

Apart from changes in beliefs, transportation was investigated as a mediating mechanism in improvement of practical knowledge of the recipients (Dahlstrom, 2012). Similarly, Murphy et al., (2011) argue that transportation is the most appropriate theoretical mechanism associating changes in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs after viewing a health promoting narrative fiction in a popular primetime program.

Transportation, as a mechanism comprising cognitive and emotional component, is also found to be related to personal characteristics of a recipient such as the need for affect and resistance to persuasion (Appel et al., 2012; Dal Cin et al., 2004). Focusing on the personal level, some studies used transportation to investigate individual distinctions and predispositions of the recipients for transportability into a fictional storytelling world (Mazzocco, et al, 2010; Van Laer et al., 2014).

In addition, Eyal & Rubin, (2003) perceive transportation as a construct conditioned and affected by narrative account, regardless of being fictional or nonfictional the narrative. In terms of fictional or non fictional content of the story, Igartua and Paez (2008) asserted that there was no significant difference in the power of transportation between these two categories.

On the other hand, Moyer-Gusé (2008) establishes that the process of transportation is deeply influenced by the recipient’s sympathy or implication with the character of the narrative fiction. Furthermore, in other study, psychological characteristics that the recipient finds to have in common with the character were found as a factor that can facilitate transportation (Hofner & Buchanan, 2005).

Finally, in the last five years some studies have confirm that transportation even in short photo-novels may be particularly useful as mediating mechanism of reducing stigma for minority ethnic groups with a long tradition of storytelling (Murphy et al., 2011; Unger et al., 2012).

Consequently, belief change seems to be indeed encouraged by transportation, indicating that for instigated imaginary is not necessary to be negative to affect beliefs – it can also be positive.

2.7.18 Measurement of transportation

Considering the fact that Green and Brock (2000) perceive transportation as a different conception from personal need for cognition, and at the same, similar to absorption, they evaluat both possibilities in order to provide evidence regarding the convergent variables of transportation.

The instrument developed to measure transportation evaluates to what extent the recipient focuses on the story and does not perceive his environment. Transportation scale (TS) also measures recipient's involvement with the narration, how it affects him emotionally and what kind of influence the narrative achieved (Green & Brock, 2002).

Thus, transportation scale intends to capture its major dimensions such as: a) emotional involvement in the narrative, b) cognitive attention to the story, c) feelings of suspense, d) lack of awareness of surroundings, and e) mental imagery.

The final Transportation scale, as presented below incorporated 11 general items. All items were measured on a seven-point scale ranged from very much to not at all.

Table 10. *Scale with items and dimensions applied to measure transportation (Green & Brock, 2000)*

Transportation Scale Items	**Measured concepts**
General items	
1. While I was reading the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place	Cognitive attention to the story
2. While I was reading the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind	Lack of awareness of surroundings
3. I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in the narrative	Cognitive attention to the story
4. I was mentally involved in the narrative while reading it	Cognitive attention to the story
5. After finishing the narrative, I found it easy to put it out of my mind (r)	Emotional involvement in the story
6. I wanted to learn how the narrative ended	Feelings of suspense
7. The narrative affected me emotionally	Emotional involvement in the story
8. I found myself thinking of ways the narrative could have turned out differently	Mental imagery
9. I found my mind wandering while reading the narrative (R)	Feelings of suspense
10. The events in the narrative are relevant to my everyday life	Cognitive attention to the story
11. The events in the narrative have changed my life	Emotional involvement in the story

Source: *Green and Brock (2000)*

The principal 11-item scale included initially four additional items specific to the narratives used in which corresponded to imagery and visual imagery. Each item measured the recipient's evaluation a specific character in the narrative on the following stem: "While reading the narrative I had a vivid image of the protagonist X".

Unfortunately, as it has been presented, transportation principally focuses on recipient's perception of his experience with content, rather than his evaluation of the content itself. As a result, being uncritical and intense, for Bilandzic and Buselle (2009) transportation is rather engagement with the content of the narrative than with a particular character of the story. In other words, as recipients get increasingly immersed in a story, their cognitive attention is dedicated to processing the narrative rather than critically evaluating content or testing the argument of the story.

Thus, according to Brechman (2010), “the reduction in counterarguing is the factor that determines transportation as a mechanism explaining the ability of narrative to influence attitudes and beliefs” (p.17).

In summary, although transportation generally explains recipient’s experience with narrative, it doesn’t clarify completely all the components responsible for such a level of engagement.

Finally, arguing that transportation is a result of several related and alternative constructs, such as: *narrative engagement, identification with the characters* and *empathy* (Bilandzic & Buselle, 2009; Green & Brock, 2002), we will present them as cognitive and emotional dimensions influencing the process of transportation.

2.7.19 Narrative engagement as an alternative concept of transportation

Narrative Engagement as one of the potential theoretical alternatives to transportation has recently been developed by Busselle and Bilandzic (2009). Based upon researches of numerous authors (Bioca, 2003; Green & Brock, 2002; Harms, Burgoon, 2003; Lee, 2004), this variable explaining persuasion, might be understood as a mental construct of meaning created by recipient in order to comprehend a narrative. Similarly, for Banyard et al., (2014) narrative engagement can be explained as a concept used to evaluate the mental effort that an individual invests into narrative creation (Banyard, et al., 2014). As opposed to transportation, according to Busselle and Bilandzic (2009), narrative engagement implies pre-existing knowledge and experience of the recipient. To understand the story, the recipient must shift "his center" of his true world into the fictional.

Explaining variation in how we process messages Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) introduce a specific dimensions of engagement divided into four concepts*: 1. comprehension of the narrative; 2. attentional focus; 3 narrative presence, and 4. emotional engagement.*

Comprehension of the narrative represents the first dimension, which is intended to facilitate the comprehension of story. This dimension is adequate for constructing a model of meaning. Understanding of the narrative refers to the degree to which recipients are able to grasp the characters' goals, actions and the events described in a narrative.

The attentional focus is directly related to the concept of transportation, since one actually captured (engaged) recipient does not notice that he focuses only on the narration.

Furthermore, *Narrative Presence*, according to Lee (2004), represents a distance to the real world, illustrating an experience of a recipient and his physical and social sensation of "being there" during his or her interaction with a mediated content. Since the recipient enters another world by losing awareness of his own environment, narrative presence implies both, mental construction and feelings of entering another world. On the other hand, instead of sensation of "being there" Lombard and Ditton (1997) defined presence as "the perceptual illusion of non mediation" (p.5). In this regard, Lombard and Ditton (1997) suggest that the perception of *presence* could be divided into two sub-groups: *physical presence*, the sensation of being physically located in a mediated environment, and *social presence*, as a feeling of co-location and social interaction with a virtual or distant person. For Gerrig (1993), narrative presence implies sensation of participation, embodiment, or spiritual observation in a story world. It reflects experiences where fiction readers, film audiences, or videogame players report feelings of being transported into a story.

Narrative presence as a part of engagement is tightly related to *perceived realism*. As Oatley (1994) suggests, the concept of perceived realism expresses the extent to which viewers perceive filmic content to be similar to the external world and their own experiences. Perceiving external realism may intensify the film experience because emotional memories originating from one's own experiences are activated and blended in, with fresh emotions evoked by the film. From the perspective of Busselle and Bilandzic (2008), perceived realism can be evaluated as agreement between the mental model of story representation, and the real life of the recipient along with his media experience reflected in schemes and stereotypes.

Finally, the fourth dimension, *Emotional engagement* as a concept tightly related to emotional empathy, represents the sympathy and compassion for the character. According to Schoenau-Fog et al., (2013), the engaged recipient feels happy when a main character achieves his goal and sad when he fails.

2.7.20 Measurement of narrative engagement

Attempting to capture narrative perception and comprehension of mechanisms explaining narrative engagement within a story, Busselle and Billandzic (2009) developed a scale and four subscales by averaging the raw scores of the three items belonging to each respective subscale.

Table 11. *Narrative Engagement Scale, Subscales, Items, Means and Standard Deviations for Each Dataset*

Items	Measured concept
NR4*: At points, I had a hard time making sense of what was going on in the program.	Narrative understanding
CP4: My understanding of the characters is unclear.	Narrative understanding
EC2: I had a hard time recognizing the thread of the story.	Narrative understanding
First subscale	
DS1: I found my mind wandering while the program was on.	Attentional focus
DS2: While the program was on I found myself thinking about other things.	Attentional focus
DS3: I had a hard time keeping my mind on the program.	Attentional focus
Second subscale	
NP4: During the program, my body was in the room, but my mind was inside the world created by the story.	Narrative presence
NP3: The program created a new world, and then that world suddenly disappeared when the program ended.	Narrative presence
NP1: At times during the program, the story world was closer to me than the real world.	Narrative presence
Third subscale	
EP5: The story affected me emotionally.	Emotional engagement
EP3: During the program, when a main character succeeded, I felt happy, and when they suffered in some way I felt sad.	Emotional engagement
SM1: I felt sorry for some of the characters in the program.	Emotional engagement
Fourth subscale	

Source: Busselle and Billandzic (2009). Note: **Key to items' original theoretical constructs: CP D cognitive perspective taking; EP D empathy; SM D sympathy; NP D narrative presence; NI D narrative involvement; LT D loss of time; LS D loss of self; EC D ease of cognitive access; DS D distraction; NR D narrative realism.*

Summing up, as it has been suggested, narrative engagement as a multidimensional construct can be regarded as a broader manifestation of transportation. Nevertheless, as *identification with narrative characters* is considered a prerequisite and key factor underlying transportation, (Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004) as well as the most relevant construct explaining processes of narrative persuasion (Igartua, 2008; Slater &

Rouner, 2002), for the purposes of the present study, we will approach this psychological concept in more detail.

2.7.21 Identification with characters

Psychoanalysis recognizes the identification as the earliest externalization of emotional connection with another person. According to Freud (1899), identification plays a significant role in the prehistory of the Oedipus complex. Having the father as his ideal, the male child shows particular interest in his father. The child tends to grow up and be like father, act like him and behave like him.

Freud (1899) defines identification as the most unique form of emotional connection to an object, modifying in such a way the lustful aggressive attachment to the object of identification through introjections of the object into the ego of the identifying person. The identification from the perspective of psychoanalysis is the first, and the most original, emotional attachment to another person or object and one of the first mechanisms of the unconscious.

The Freud's subconscious identification with father, in an implicit way represents integral component of identification with a particular person. This model of identification is particularly important in adolescence, especially in terms of identification with that same person (Makoby & Jacklin, 1974). The role models and symbolic models in social psychology are associated with learning by the model as the important form of social learning (Dimitrijevic, 2005).

On the other hand, Roth (1974) points out that imitating other people's behavior and emulating the way of other’s reactions is a significant source of social behavior. In this regard, Bandura (1977, 2004) believes that identification would be almost impossible without social context, because, behaviour as a complex cognitive component of any individual is adopted from the social environment during the practice of observational learning. People have developed and improved their capacity of learning by model that enables them to disseminate their knowledge and skills based on information of transmitted action of models.

Furthermore, Bandura (1977) implies that learning by model makes not only various aspects of socialization, but also emotional and cognitive development. In such a way are adopted the values, attitudes, social roles, standards for evaluation of our own behavior and other behaviors important for life in the society. Identification with parental figures is significant for affective development of a child. In addition, models affect the formation of judgmental standards, cognitive competencies, logical rules, ways of viewing and troubleshooting (Fluori & Buchanan, 2002; Zirkel, 2002).

By all means, identification as viewed from the perspective of social learning theory is similar to the Freudian conception related to the Oedipus complex. As McLeod (2011) suggests, both of these perspectives comprise internalizing or adopting another person's behavior. However, "during the Oedipus complex the child can only identify with the same sex parent, whereas with Social learning theory the person (child or adult) can potentially identify with any other person" (p. 2).

In extending previous ideas on identification, recently, the concept of identification has been defined as an imaginative process invoked as a response to characters presented within mediated texts (Cohen, 2001). On the other hand, as identification involves forgetting ourselves and become the other, Igartua and Barrios (2012) classify identification with the character as a multidimensional creation that includes various processes such as "cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and sensation of becoming the character or merging" (p. 520). Some of the researchers define identification as a variable that substantially affects the enjoyment (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Soto-Sanfiel, Aymerich-Franch & Ribes, 2010). Furthermore, identification is perceived as one of the principle mechanisms that explain the effects of the media entertainment (Igartua & Muñiz, 2008), and a variable measuring impact produced by the explosion of the products in media entertainment (Igartua & Páez, 1998). Finally, identification is identified as a temporal change in auto-perception among video game players (Klimmt, Hefner & Vorderer, 2009).

2.7.22 Role of Identification

Establishing identification as a key psychological mechanism underlying the persuasive influence, Igartua and Paez (1998) affirm that "identification with narrative characters is a variable that might interfere or mediate the affective impact produced by the exposure to series or feature films" (p. 425). Cohen (2001) suggests that, through external judgment of the character's actions or, external treatment of the particular character, the viewer achieves identification with character's emotions from the inside, without necessity to feel any particular kind of affinity, similarity or attraction.

Considering the fact that affinity and attraction, messages distributed by the celebrities increase the reception of the contents by the audience (Brow & Bocarnea, 2006; Cohen 2001), Moyer and Nabi (2010), reveal that the Identification with the celebrity characters can increase the persuasive power of the messages in a domain of educational programs.

In addition, researching the world of video games, Klimmt, Hefner and Vorderer (2009) find evidence that players tend to identify with a character or fictional role they have in the game. Actually, according to Klimmt et al, 2009), the players change their self-concept by adopting positive and heroic attributes of the fictional interactive character. For instance, the players perceive themselves as more valuable, heroic, and powerful during identification with a fictional video game soldier.

In the context of interactivity, Soto-Sanfiel, Aymerich-Franch and Ribes, (2010) revise effect of interactivity on identification with characters contrasting an interactive film to a traditional film offering a non-interactive plot. The results reveal that the participants are more identified with the characters of the film with interactive configuration than with those of the conventional design.

In this regard, using a fictional narrative and contrasting its impacts to a traditional non-narrative, Murphy et al., (2014) suggest that identification with specific characters and emotions, contribute to changes in emotional and cognitive aspects of both, male and female participants' attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Exploring the role of gender and similarity in the process of identification, Hoffner and Buchanan (2005) reveal that women identify more with the female characters while men identify with male characters. Positive results in researches focusing on identification with narrative characters, and its influence on changes in behavioral intentions of both genders, have been found also in other studies (Kim et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2011).

In consequence, enhancing the importance of identification, Moyer-Gusé (2008) reveal that individuals are more likely to learn more from characters that they like, or feel as if they are familiar with.

Furthermore, some other authors confirm that identification with characters is an important component of the narrative in affecting behaviours (Moyer-Gusé, Chung, & Jain, 2011), as well as a significant predictor of the entertainment. In context of television, identification was found to be an imaginative process that permits the personal experience from the audience in relation to the character (Tukachinsky, 2007).

Identification is also identified as an explanatory factor for the success of some dramatic products (Villanueva, Revilla, & Bilbao, 2012). Some recent results indicate that identifying with fictional characters is also positively related to changes in cognitive aspects of the viewer's experience of identification (Banerjee & Greene, 2012).

Finally, investigating the role of identification with lesbian characters in homosexual and heterosexual participants, Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti and Palencia (2014) find that the central dimension of identification (emotional empathy) has the most significant influence on the process of identification.

2.7.23 Dimensions of Identification

As it has been suggested before, Igartua (1998, 2012) perceives identification as a multidimensional concept referring to the series of psychological processes such as: "cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and sensation of becoming the character or merging" (p. 520).

Likewise, considering that identification is a complex construct involving different psychological aspects, Cohen (2001) introduces four fundamental dimensions that would comprise the entire conception of identification.

2.7.24 Empathy

The fundamental dimension of identification is *empathy* or sharing the feelings of the character (i.e., being happy; sad; or scared, not for the character, but with the character). Based on such reasoning, for the purposes of the present research, we will summarize the key concepts of this dimension in more detail.

As one of the principal dimensions of identification (Igartua & Muñiz, 2008), empathy was introduced to social sciences as a process of sharing emotions with others (Lipps, 1903; McDougall, 1908). In this regard, Lipps (1903) strongly believe that empathy appears as a result of inner imitation of other's behaviors, and was the first who defined it under the German term "Einfühlung". On the other hand, focusing more on the cognitive side, Kohler (1929) and Piaget, 1932) define empathy as a degree of accuracy in the perception of others. In this regard, Kohler (1929) suggested that empathy was more cognitive than emotional understanding of the other's feelings.

Generally, nowadays, both perspectives were integrated into a multidimensional definition, considering both, cognitive and affective elements. This integrated and multidimensional perspective, defines empathy as emotional reactions of an individual at observing the experiences of another (Igartua & Paez, 1998; Klimmt, Hefner & Vorderer, 2009; Moyer-Guse, 2008; Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2010). As it has been suggested before, Igartua (1998) perceives identification as a multidimensional concept referring to the series of psychological processes such as: cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, ability to fantasize or imagine, and the fact of becoming the protagonist.

For that reason, empathy as a concept involving emotional and cognitive components can be divided in two subgroups:

Emotional empathy: ability to feel what the character feels (Rot, 2009). In other words, this term describes personal disposition to experience feelings of compassion and concern for the other, after negative experiences.

Cognitive empathy: can be recognized as the ability to understand the others (Preston & de Waal, 2002), to put ourselves in their place, get the perspective, or adopt the viewpoint of others (perspective-taking). Perspective taking is considered as the spontaneous tendency to adopt the viewpoint of others, or the ability to understand the other's point of view (Moya-Albiol, Smith & Bernal, 2010).

2.7.25 Sources of Empathy

In attempting to explain how both, cognitive and affective processes interact in empathic response, Hoffman (2003) offers five possibilities:

1) The first way of achieving empathy is mimicry. Hoffman supports the view that humans unconsciously tend to imitate and synchronize their facial gestures, expressions, attitudes or voice with other persons. Even though, it is not clear whether the mimicry is a result of self-perception and cognitive reasoning, mimicry is in fact a neurologically based mechanism for inducing empathy too fast and too complex to be conscious.

2) Another important mechanism for the appearance of empathy is the classic conditioning. According to Dimitrijevic (2005), classic conditioning is very important in childhood, especially before the development of speech. The classic conditioning is composed of two steps: the conditioning of facial expression and the inductive reasoning. Unlike mimicry which is a response to the victim's face experiencing an emotion, the conditioning is a reaction to the victim's situation.

3) The third, involuntary, automatic and rapid mechanism is a direct association. Direct association refers to observer's previous experience of discomfort or pain. This previous experience can be revived and provoked either by signs of distress in the victim or by some signals from the situation that bears resemblance to one's own. Being unconscious, all these three mechanism involve very low level of cognitive processing.

4) The fourth, more complex way to provoke empathy is mediated association. It is called mediated because it is the language that mediates between the victim's and the observers' feelings. In this respect, the victim does not have to be physically present and exposed to the observers' view to provoke the observers' emotion. The association usually coincides with the importance of the principle of care for other person (Batson and Powell, 2003). However, there are situations in which people may have a tendency to hide by words their true feelings. In such case the real feelings of the victim can be reached using more primitive mechanisms such as: mimicry, conditioning and associations.

5) The fifth and last way of provoking empathy is role-taking. Role-taking requires the highest level of cognitive processing. It actually means placing oneself in someone else's position and imagining how a person in that position feels.

2.7.26 The role of Empathy

Viewed as prerequisites, understanding and sharing the emotional states of others, recent researches suggest that the principal role of empathy is creation and promotion of interpersonal relationships and social interactions (Decety & Moriguchi, 2007). In this context, Decety and Lamm, (2007), indicate that understanding and sharing other people's feelings can encourage, in some cases, a concern that motivates action in helping others and generating pro-social behaviour. Particularly the altruistic behavior will be achieved through the empathic concern for the other, that is, those emotional reactions that involve feelings of compassion, sympathy and tenderness (Decety & Lamm, 2006). However, sharing feelings with others does not necessarily imply empathic act of provide help or support. The emotional and social context generating the empathic response, according to Decety and Jackson (2004), can be quite complex, depending on the feelings experienced by the observer, as well as his/her relationship with the observed. For Anderson and Keltner (2002) empathy is a mechanism that enables comprehension of the thoughts and intentions of others. Feeling similar emotions increases the capacity to understand what intentions, motivations and perceptions of other people are. Finally, empathy gives us opportunity to take the perspective of others.

2.7.27 Other dimensions of Identification

The second dimension that Cohen (2001) considers significantly responsible for the process of identifying with the character is a cognitive characteristic that should be seen as *sharing the perspective of the character*. Practically this dimension can be determined by the degree to which a recipient of a narrative feels and understands the character and the motivations for his or her behavior.

The third indicator of identification is motivational, and this dimension according to Cohen (2001) is directly related to the extent to which the recipient internalizes and shares the aims of the character.

Finally, the fourth pertaining element of identification is *absorption* or the degree to which self-awareness would be lost throughout exposure to the narrative. Taking into account that Cohen (2001) conceives identification as temporary and ephemeral process, this dimension should be influenced by both, the scope of intensity and regularity. Thus, consequently, the more the recipient is immersed in the narrative, the more he or she empathizes with, and understands the character. In other words, the more the recipient adopts the goals of the character, the more he or she identifies with that character.

In addition, *Personal attraction to the characters* is related to other dimensions of identification with the characters. This dimension involves positive evaluation or liking of the attractive character, perception of similarity with the character and recipient's desire to be like the character.

2.7.28 Measurement of Identification

Based upon the described dimensions of identification, Cohen (2001) developed a scale measuring identification with the character.

Table 12. *Scale with items and dimensions applied to measure identification (Cohen, 2001)*

Items	Measured concepts
1. While viewing program X, I felt as if I was part of the action.	Emotional empathy or shearing the feelings of the character
2. While viewing program X, I forgot myself and was fully absorbed.	To be like a character or shearing the perspective of the character
3. I was able to understand the events in the program in a manner similar to that in which character X understood them.	Cognitive empathy
4. I think I have a good understanding of character X.	Cognitive empathy
5. I tend to understand the reasons why character X does what he or she does.	Cognitive empathy
6. While viewing the show I could feel the emotions character X portrayed.	Emotional empathy or shearing the feelings of the character
7. During viewing, I felt I could really get inside character X's head.	To be like a character or shearing the perspective of the character
8. At key moments in the show, I felt I knew exactly what character X was going through.	Emotional empathy or shearing the feelings of the character
9. While viewing the program, I wanted character X to succeed in achieving his or her goals.	Attraction to the character, internalization and sharing the goals of the character
10. When character X succeeded I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad.	Emotional empathy or shearing the feelings of the character

Source: Cohen (2001)

As an empirical step forward in measuring dimensions of identification with the characters, and considering that identification is a wide-ranging underlying aspect contained in three implicit factors (*emotional empathy*, *cognitive empathy* and *sensation of becoming the character*), Igartua (2010) developes a scale consisting of 11 items.

The scale is structured as a 5-point response arrangement instrument, from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). All the items tend to measure the extent to which the participants achieve identification with the character of the film.

Table 13. *Scale with items and dimensions applied to measure identification with the characters* (Igartua, 2010)

Items	Measured concepts
1. I felt emotionally involved with X's feelings	Emotional empathy
2. I understood how X acts, thinks and feels	Emotional empathy
3. I understood X's feelings or emotions	Emotional empathy
4. I imagined how I would act if I were X	Cognitive empathy
5. I was concerned about what was happening to X	Cognitive empathy
6. I tried to imagine X's feelings, thoughts and reactions	Cognitive empathy
7. I tried to see things I from X's point of view	Cognitive empathy
8. I felt as if I were X	Sensation of becoming the character or merging
9. I myself experienced X's emotional reaction	Sensation of becoming the character or merging
10. I had the impression of living X's story myself	Sensation of becoming the character or merging
11. I identified with X	Sensation of becoming the character or merging

Source: Igartua (2010)

As it has been presented in previous chapters, the claim that the media has the influence on the attitudes is taken almost as an axiom (Cohen (2001; Green & Brock, 2000; Farr & Degroult, 2008; Igartua, 2008, 2010; Igartua & Barrios, 2012).

On the other hand, other researches suggest that the attitudes are relatively permanent clusters of feelings, beliefs and behavioral tendencies directed towards certain people, ideas, objects or groups (Baron & Byrne, 1984). The same factors that lead to the formation of a certain attitude can also affect its change. Messages (written, oral or audiovisual) aimed to change attitudes of the people are commonly referred to as persuasive (convincing) messages, and those factors that increase or diminish the effectiveness of these messages have been subject to intense research in the last fifty years (Cacioppo & Petty 1981; Festinger,1957; Gass & Seiter, 2003; Green & Brock 2000; McGuire, 1972; O'Keefe, 2002; Smith, 1968).

Given that the pertinent literature reviewed as theoretical bases for the present study, had by no means got an unambiguous empirical corroboration on persuasion, the following step will be to make a new contribution by associating the most appropriate studied concepts with the relevant categories.

In this regard, we will propose hypothesis and research questions in order to make a step forward towards the principal objectives of our empirical research in Serbia.

3. Research questions and hypotheses

3.1 Effects of the film on attitude change

As we explained in theoretical part, despite a general development in terms of human rights, democracy, and equal opportunities for all persons, various Serbian researches reveal that this country is still deeply marked by homophobic attitudes (Golubovic, et al., 1995; Lazarevic, et al, 2015 Petrovic, 2013; Radoman, 2012; Visnjic, 2012, 2014; Zivanovic et al, 2014).

According to Pew Research Center (2014), only 29% of Serbian citizens consider homosexuality as tolerable. This percentage of acceptance is low particularly if we take into account the fact that some other European countries (Spain 55%, Netherland 91%) perceive homosexuality as socially acceptable. In Spain, as Platero Méndez (2009) indicates, democracy represented the beginning of formal equality of gay people. More specifically, the democratization process, according to Platero Méndez (2009), had an impact on “creation of feminist and gay movements emerging clandestinely in the early seventies and blooming later in the next decade of the eighties” (p. 36).

As a result, the principal hypothesis of the current study is based on the previous empirical researches finding evidences that the exposure to specific fiction contents such as written stories (Green & Brock, 2000), or feature films (Farr & Degroult, 2008; Igartua, 2008, 2010; Soto-Sanfiel, Aymerich-Franch & Ribes, 2011), as a modern kind of narrative fiction exert significant effects on attitudes and beliefs of the receivers.

In the field of communication sciences, using as a stimuli material film *A Day without a Mexican* (2004)[29], Igartua (2010) showed that an effective way to improve attitudes towards stigmatized groups such as immigrants, was by encouraging empathy towards a member of that group. In a posterior empirical research Igartua & Barrios (2012) used a controversial film *El Camino* (2008)[30] implying negative aspects of Opus Dei. The results obtained by these two authors indicated that the participants who were exposed experimentally to the film acquired negative opinions toward belonging to stigmatized groups, allowing audiences empathize with Opus Dei and religion, while, the relationship between political self-positioning and the aforementioned beliefs weakened.

In this regard, Cohen (2001) argues that a continued and repeated exposure to fiction contents on television influences on the attitudes and beliefs of the receivers. Similarly, Igartua (2010) found empirical evidence that fictional narratives exert significant effects beyond pure entertainment, fun and emotional impact.

More specifically, there is also empirical evidence of media's influence on the reception of gay people. Various studies found that positive representation of gay people, induced to more positive attitudes toward homosexuality (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Lee & Hicks, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Mazur & Emmers-Sommers, 2002; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Schiappa, 2005, 2006; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014).

In conclusion, Mar et al., (2006) suggest that experiences obtained through narrative fiction are processed much like real-life personal experiences.

[29] Artenstein, I. (Producer), & Arau, S. (Director). (2004).
[30] Manso, L. (Producer), & Fesser, J. (Director). (2008).

As a result, the target of this empirical study is to examine whether, and to what extent the exposure to the feature film, makes an effect on attitudes, beliefs and emotions toward gay people.

In view of the positive representation of homosexuality in a broader context of archetypal conflict between the two opposing sides, we propose the following research question and hypothesis:

Research question 1: Following Zivanovic's et al, (2014) consideration that homophobia as a complex phenomenon is consisted of five components (*Aversive behaviour, Social threat, Hatred, Experience of revulsion and Ego defense*), we ask: whether and to what extent, viewing the film with positive representation of gay people will exert effect on levels of homophobia and its pertaining dimensions.

Hypothesis 1: Viewers exposed to positive representation of gay people will show a more favourable attitude towards gay people. The participants will express a higher degree of agreement with positive beliefs about homosexuality, and will experience more positive emotions toward gay male sexual orientation.

3. 2 Identification as a potential moderator

Some previous researches observed the process of identification with lesbian characters in view of reception (Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2014), while other studies found identification with characters as the key factor explaining persuasion (Banerjee & Greene, 2012; Cohen,2001; Igartua, 2007, 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Moyer-Gusé, 2008; Moyer- Gusé et al., 2011; Moyer &

Nabi, 2010). With this aim in view, we will follow the theoretical guideline proposed by Igartua (2010), given that one of the most important purposes of our study is to verify, whether the identification with the characters explains the persuasive impact caused by viewing the film.

For this reason, one of the most important goals of the research is to analyze the effects of identification with the characters as a dependent and explanatory variable of the narrative persuasion. Identification with the characters, as it has been presented in theoretical part, is a multidimensional construct (Cohen, 2001) containing components such as emotional empathy, cognitive empathy, to be like a character and sensation of becoming the character or merging (Igartua, 2010). In this respect, one of the most important purposes is to verify whether the identification with the characters, and what dimensions of identification explain the persuasive impact caused by viewing positive depiction of gay people in a fiction. In addition, the aim of the present research is to analyze the relationship between the identification with the characters and the degree of homophobia after viewing the film.

According to various researchers (Green & Brock, 2000; Cohen, 2001; Igartua, 2008, 2010) the identification with the characters can increase involvement to the message, and encourage greater cognitive elaboration of the persuasive content. In addition, identification as a construct containing a predominant affective dimension was perceived to play an important role in a temporal change of auto-perception between the video players, in a virtual context of video games (Klimmt, Hefner, & Vorderer, 2009). Finally, considering that moral values and positive depiction of the principal homosexual character influence the degree of identification (Ibiti, 2015; Raney, 2004), we establish the following research question and hypothesis:

Research question 2: Will there be any significant difference between man and women in the level of identification with homosexual character?

Hypothesis 2: Viewers exposed to positive depiction of gay people, who are more identified with the homosexual protagonists, will show a more favourable attitude towards gay men, and manifest a higher degree of agreement with positive beliefs about homosexuality. Thus we expect a negative and direct correlation between the degree of identification with the main characters and the degree of homophobia: The higher degree of identification, the lower degree of homophobia.

3. 3 Interpersonal contact

The third hypothesis is based on Inter-contact theory developed by Allport in 1954. Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954) provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of contact in improving intergroup attitudes. This hypothesis assumes that a quality relationship with the members of other people's group can be an effective way to develop positive attitudes toward that group. Social contacts vary in *intensity* (frequency of contacts, number of participants in a situation where there is contact) and *quality* (the nature of the interaction with members of the other group). Contact Hypothesis is mainly focused on quality.

To be precise, Allport (1954) holds a view that the contact itself is not sufficient to correct the attitudes of individuals towards another group, but the contact must include equal status among members of different groups, common objectives, intergroup cooperation and support provided by the official governmental institutions. A contact that meets these criteria to a greater extent promotes positive attitudes toward another group more than one that does not meet them.

The positive effects of the contact that meets these criteria have been demonstrated in various researches (Detenber et al, 2013; Hodson, 2008, 2011; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Christ, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). The study of Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) found that the contact not only leads to improvement of attitudes toward members of other groups in a specific situation, but also affects the perception of the members of the group in other contexts. Moreover, inter-group contact promotes more favourable attitudes towards members of other groups which are not included in the contact situation. In other words, the effects of the contact have the capacity for generalization to other situations and other groups.

The contact as a concept includes the aspect of quantity, but also the one that concerns the quality of the contact. Such an attitude about the importance of these two dimensions as a form of contact produces a focus on affective processes as key mediators of the relationship between the contact and the change of attitude, making in the end this theory relevant for the present study. Although the inter-contact studies were often focused on the relation between racial and ethnic groups (Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Stephan, Diaz & Duran, 2000), or persons with physical disabilities and mental disorders (Desfroges, Lord, Ramsey, & Mason, 1991), the focus has gradually been extended and targets groups that represent homosexually oriented minorities (Herek, 2000; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Hicks & Lee 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Raja y Stokes, 1998; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2013).

What is particularly important for the present study is the fact that the contact has been proved to be effective in reducing prejudices against gay people (Hodson et al., 2009; Hodson & Busseri, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). Moreover, other studies (Herek & Glunt, 1993;

Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007) found that the contact predicted attitudes toward gay people better than any other demographic or social-psychological variable. In this regard, we establish the following research question and hypothesis:

Research question 3: What kind of role will play the previous contact with gay men, in the degree of homophobia, before and after being exposed to positive depiction of homosexual characters?

Hypothesis 3: Audiences who earlier in their life had contacts with the gay people, compared to the participants who did not have them at all, will show a higher degree of identification with the tragic homosexual protagonists, and will show a more favorable attitude toward gay men after viewing the film.

3. 4 Quality and quantity of contact

According to evidences found in previous studies (Shook, 2007; Aberson & Haag, 2007; Pruett & Chan, 2006) stating that both, quality and quantity of contact are effective predictors in reducing prejudices directed against gay people, we hypothesize that the quality and quantity of contact will affect the change in attitude toward gay men. In this context we formulate the following research question and hypothesis:

Research question 4: What will be the correlations between different aspects of film evaluation with regard to quality and quantity of contact with gay people?

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant contribution of the quality and quantity of the contact with gay people to the degree of homophobia and identification with gay male character. The higher quality and quantity of contacts will result in higher degree of identification with the protagonists of the film.

3. 5 Gender

Some earlier researches found evidences that women generally have more positive attitudes toward homosexual persons than men (Herek, 1994, 2000; Simon, 1995; LaMar & Kite, 1998). In one of his earlier researches Herek (1984) noticed this that heterosexual men have more negative attitudes than heterosexual women on a scale of attitudes towards homosexual women, but also on the scale of attitudes toward homosexual men. As being the first allegation corroborated by empirical data, Kite (1984) also asserted that heterosexual men have more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than heterosexual women

In a posterior study, Herek (2002) clarified that the correlation between the gender of the participant and the homosexual object of the attitude can be considered as significant, given that heterosexual persons tend to show more negative attitude toward homosexual persons of their own gender. This pattern is according to La Mar and Kite (1998) more pronounced among heterosexual men.

On the other hand, the difference between the attitudes of heterosexual women towards homosexuality depending on the gender is not clearly evidenced because some studies (Herek, 1988; Kite, 1984) argue that heterosexual women equally assess homosexual men and women, while other (Gentry, 1987; Kite & Whitley, 1996) suggest that women assess more negatively homosexual women than homosexual men.

The results of some recent researches (Decoo, 2014; Longin, 2014; Parmac, 2005) showed a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward gay men with regard to gender. Nevertheless, no statistically significant differences in attitudes towards homosexual women were determined. Men and women had different attitudes toward gay men, and men had more negative attitude towards homosexual men than women. In addition, Korljan (2007) found that when the objects of attitudes were homosexual women, on the subscales condemning/tolerating and morality, there were no gender-based differences in attitudes. On the same subscales, when the objects of attitudes were homosexual men, there were gender-based differences in attitudes; men had more negative attitudes than women. Therefore, we propose the following research question and hypothesis:

Research question 5: Will the gender-related differences in the degree of homophobia be mediated by the potential identification with the character?

Hypothesis 5: Gender will determine the impact of the film on attitudes towards gay men. Attitudes of men will be more negative than attitudes of women towards gay male characters.

3. 6 Religiosity

Regardless of the type of the religion (e.g., Christianity, Islam and Judaism) or the nature of the religiousness (intrinsic/extrinsic)[31], various researches suggest that religiosity is frequently associated with unfavorable attitudes toward minority groups such as gay people (Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson & Burris, 1994; Detenber, 2007; Hunsberger & Jackson, 1990; Whitley & Kite, 2010 et al.,).

According to Detenber et al., (2013) religious persons are more predisposed to manifest negative reception of lesbian and gay male sexual orientation, and "are less accepting of gay people in general, because such attitudes and a lack of acceptance are congruent with their religious beliefs" (p.183). Therefore, if the religion is perceived as a directing force of a religious individual (Whitley et al., 2010), and strong predictor of negative attitudes towards homosexuality (Detenber et al., 2013; Longin, 2014), for the purpose of the present study we ask and hypothesize:

Research question 6: Will there be any significant distinctiveness among the participants of diferent religions (e.g., Orthodox, Catholics or Muslims) in the expressed degree of homophobia? Are there differences in the manifested homophobia depending on the religion the participants hold?

Research question 6.1: Will religiosity affect attitude change towards gay characters?

[31] As it has been presented before in theoretical framework; extrinsic religiousness is according to Allport and Ross (1967) the ability of an individual to use religion for achieving some personal, social or political goals. On the other hand, a person intrinsically religious honestly believes in the religion and all its dogmas, trying to live their lives as their religion moralizes that they are supposed to.

Hypothesis 6: Religiosity will have a direct effect on the degree of homophobia and attitude change. There will be a substantial negative correlation between the participant's expressed degree of religiosity and the attitude change generated by the film. The higher the religiosity the lesser the attitude change after viewing the film.

3. 7 The third person effect

Taking into account that films giving a positive depiction of gay male could transmit a message that is conflicting with personal beliefs of traditional societies (Dragojevic, 2013); we predict the existence of *the third person effect* after viewing the film.

The hypothesis about the third person effect is based on the Davison's (1983) perceptive component indicating that people generally believe that the media have more influence on other people than on themselves. The third person effect, according to Perloff (2002) is explained as our perception that a media message is addressed with a much larger and more powerful effect on others, than to us.

As a phenomenon tightly related to the media reception, the third person effect was investigated in view of public, marketing and advertizing campaigns (Connors, 2005; Saliven, 1998), social psychology (Golan & Banning, 2008; Griffin, 2012; Johansson, 2010), socio-demographic variables (Perloff, 2002; Wau & Youn, 2004) and behavioral consequences (Gunther, Perloff & Tsfati, 2008).

Beside the traditional media environment, the third person effect has been studied in a wide range of contexts and formats such as: Internet websites (Banning & Sweetser, 2007), online marketing (Zhang & Daugherty, 2009) or social networking platforms (Schweisberger, et al., 2014).

Due to the theoretical approach outlined above, and considering the third person effect as a perceptual response to the media reception, we ask:

Research question 7: What will be the contributions of *film evaluation, the third person effect* and *identification*, to the variance in the homophobia level after viewing the film?

Hypothesis 7: The influence of the film in reducing of homophobia will be perceived to be stronger on others, than on the self.

4. Method

4.1 The quantitative method

For the purpose of this research we rely on the quantitative method, since one of the objectives of the study (as it has been explained in the theoretical part) is to investigate the interplay of various variables as underlying factors explaining persuasion.

The quantitative method is of a great assistance in identifying subjacent relations between the described variables as well as the degree of their relevance (Havelka, Kuzmanovic & Popadic, 2004) in this particular empirical research. In addition, this method might indicate some other processes and effects that eventually established relation and that were not foreseen in the hypothesis of the study. Furthermore, the quantitative approach is recommendable for its capacity to identify and to quantify the degree of relevance of specific sub-dimensions and components of broader constructs such as homophobia and identification with the character.

In general, using the quantitative method, we can cover in a uniformed way a large sample of participant and offer a statistical comparison of various types of obtained data (Render & Stair, 2000). Since this method is based on accurate results, the overall research can be carried out objectively and in a short period of time (Igartua, 2006).

In spite of the results obtained in previous researches related to influences of narrative fiction, and basing on the features of causality, the quantitative method help us explain distinctiveness of the reception of gay people in a particular Serbian context where the research is conducted. Finally, with the quantitative operation we are able to identify, diagnose and analyze the factors, mechanisms and persuasive processes involved in the causes of possible attitude change in a specific culture such as Serbian.

4.2 Design of the study

In order to meet the objectives of the study, we employed a quasi-experimental research design. According to Mejovsek (2008), this kind of design refers to subjects or tested groups without preselecting process of randomization. Generally, a quasi-experiment is a type of empirical study principally employed to evaluate the effects of an intervention on its target group.

Although quasi-experiments are more vulnerable to threats of validity, they share some common features with the traditional randomized experimental design. Despite the fact that quasi-experiments specifically lack the element of random assignment, they are commonly more feasible than traditional random treatments (Morgan, 2000, p.795).

As Shuttleworth (2008) indicate, quasi-experimental approach is used when the researcher is not in a position to meet the requirements of a randomized experiment, due to problems of ethical or practical nature.

Although the most commonly used quasi-experimental designs are not representative samples of the population, we use students as subjects of a specific social environment, given that the aim of the experiment is not to describe how a particular phenomenon occurs in society but to analyze exposure and effect correlations.

Therefore, we created a design with a block of different subjects including an experimental group (which viewed a film with a positive representation of homosexuality) and a control group (which did not watch the film).

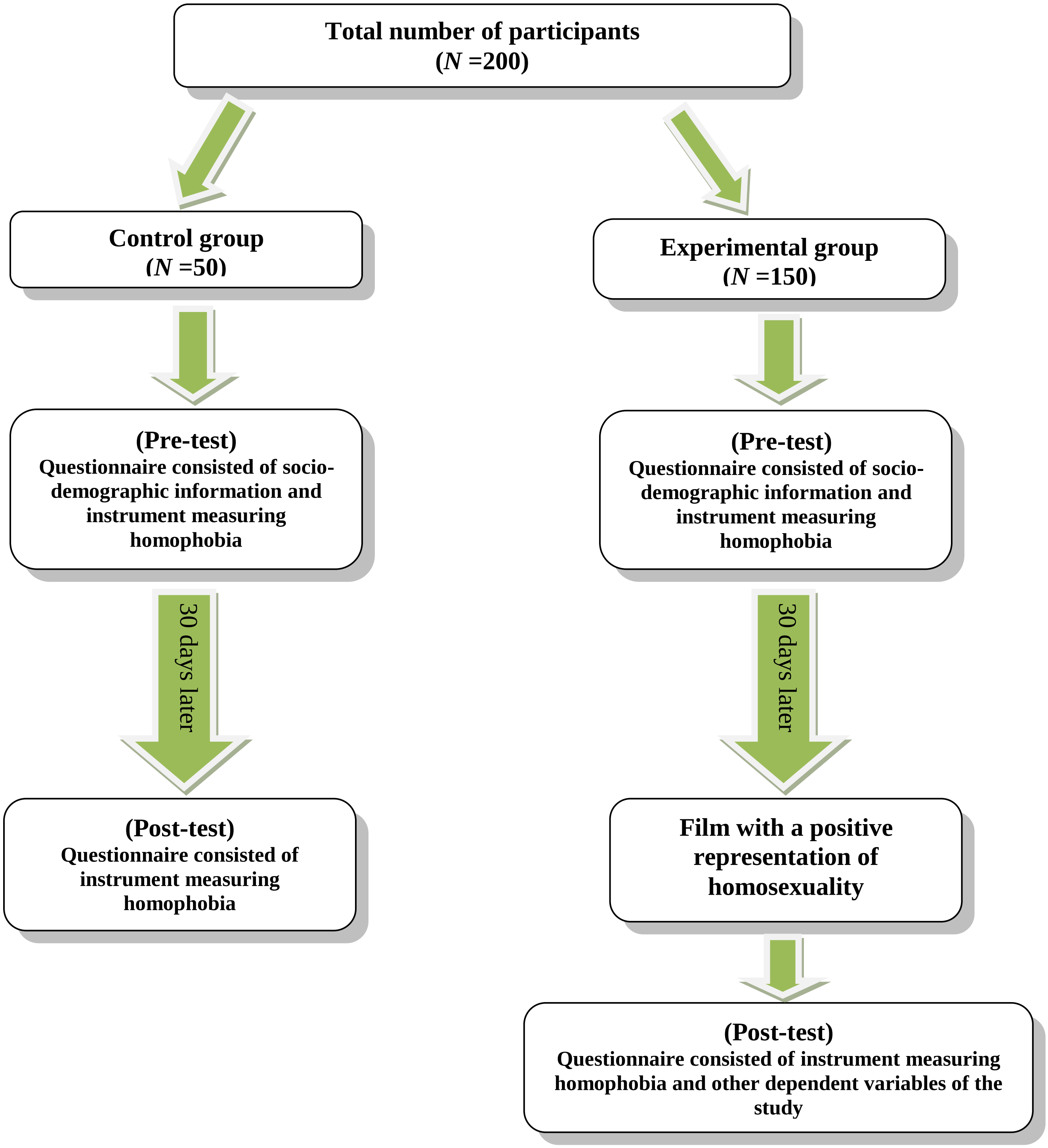
The overall testing was divided in two stages. A total of 200 student participants were divided into two groups. The control group consisted of 50 students, while the other 150 participants formed the experimental group.

In order to secure anonymity of the testing, each of the participants got the code under which they filled the questionnaire. The code itself was composed of the date and month of birth of the participant, to make sure that they will not forget their password until the next stage of the experiment. The test was performed in groups of 25 - 30 participants (one school class).

Preventing the possible tendency of participants in giving the consistent answers, the first stage (pre-test), was conducted approximately one month before the experimental stage. The purpose of this intervention was to reduce the possibility of repeating the same answers at the measurement performed after viewing the film.

The questionnaire containing socio-demographic information as well as the scale measuring homophobia was applied to all 200 participants. In the second stage (post-test), the control group (N = 50) completed again the questionnaire containing questions related to homophobia, while the experimental group (N = 150) watched a film depicting gay men in a very affirmative way. After viewing the film, the experimental group was given again the questionnaire containing questions related to the film, instrument measuring homophobia and other dependent variables of the study (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Schematic overview of quasi-experimental design of the study



Note. Instrument measuring homophobia and other dependent variables are explained in the section: 4.5 Materials.

4.3 Participants

Participants were students recruited at the university campus in Bjeljina. The sample consisted of 200 participants (80 females). The average age was 21.64 (*SD* = 2.27). The total of 150 subjects entered the experimental part of the study, while the other 50 served as a control group. Majority of the sample declared as Orthodox Christians (*N* = 176, 88%), whereas smaller proportions reported to be Muslims (*N* = 17, 8.5%). Correspondingly, the smallest number of participants (*N* = 7, 3.5%) reported to be atheists. Furthermore, the majority of the sample were of Serbian nationality (*N* = 181, 90.5%), whereas smaller proportions were Bosnian (*N* = 17, 8.5%) and Croats (*N* = 2, 1%). All participants declared being heterosexuals. There were no significant differences between the experimental and the control group regarding age, gender, nationality and religion structure. All the students participated on a voluntary basis, without receiving any economical compensation.

4.4 Procedure

The tests were conducted at the Bijeljina's Faculty of Social Sciences in January 2015. At the beginning of the session, the participants were given oral and written instructions explaining that the questionnaire was a part of a project of investigation that was developed within the doctoral studies program at Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona (Departament de Comunicación Audiovisual i Publicitat). Without giving excessive information on the nature of the study, the participants were briefly informed that the purpose of this investigation was to extend the knowledge on the reception of cinematography and its influence. Particularly for that reason we needed to get their opinion on how some frequent film characters and social groups were represented in films and more importantly how they deserved, or should have been represented.

Furthermore, the participants were kindly asked to read carefully each one of the questions and encircle one of the answers. They were also asked to respond honestly, since there were no correct and incorrect answers. Finally, the participants were informed that the participation in the study was absolutely anonymous, so they were expected to answer all the questions sincerely.

4.5 Materials

4.5.1 Instruments and variables

Homophobia: Homophobia presented as an independent variable of the current research was measured by the scale of Homophobia (H 25) developed and validated by Zivanovic et al., (2014). Consisting of 25 items, and being measured at both phases (pretest and posttest), perceived homophobia for each item of the scale used a 5-item Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree).

In constructing the homophobia scale, Zivanovic et al., (2014) started from the observation that attitudes related to homophobia were complex and therefore strove to select the items that would cover all the components of homophobic attitudes. To cover the overall construct, the scale (H25) identifies 5 indicators of homophobia:

1) *Aversive behaviour* towards members of the homosexual population, and willingness to take action against them / or actively avoiding contact with members of the homosexual

population. To identify aversive behaviour, the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the following statements: “I would never insult gays”, “Any action against gay people for me is unacceptable”, “If we were well organized, we could re-educate homosexuals, “I would cooperate with persons of homosexual orientation”, “Homosexuality should be eradicated”.

2) *Social threat* is manifested as the perception and experience that the members of the homosexual population are threat for social norms and order. To identify social threat, the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the following statements: “Gay is OK”, “It is unacceptable that a civilized society persecutes homosexuals as if they were beasts”, “Homosexuals should be isolated in order not to destroy our society”, “Homosexuals are a tumor of any society”.

3) *Hatred or contempt* represents discrimination and perception of homosexuals as inferior persons. To identify hatred or contempt, the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the following statements: “The fact that somebody is homosexual does not prevent me to appreciate him as a person”, “Being gay does not mean being less valuable”, “I do not judge people based on who they go to bed with, “A homosexual is only politically correct name for a fagot”, “Homosexuals are not people worthy of respect”.

4) *Experience of revulsion or disgust*, reports on negative emotions about contact or thought of homosexuals. To identify revulsion or disgust, the participants were asked to express their degree of agreement with the following statements: “I don’t understand why some people are so disgusted at the mention of gay population”, “I do not see why sex among gay population should be seen as something dirty”, “It does not bother me to see a film with homosexual

themes”, “When I see gays I feel sick and my heart starts pounding”, “It disgusts me when I see two people of the same sex passionately kissing”.

5) *Ego defense,* is based on fear of jeopardizing own sexual identity, and is assessed by asking the participants to what extent they agree with the following statements: “If I were gay, I would be proud about it”, “I'd rather kill myself than be a gay”, “If I was attracted to persons of the same sex, I would ignore it and try to be normal”, “If I were gay, I’d feel ashamed to go out to the street”, “A mere thought of an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex is frightening to me”.

Identification with character (Mirko): The instrument used to measure identification with Mirko in the posttest, was the scale (EDI) constructed and validated by Igartua (2010). The Igartua’s scale is composed of 11 items and designed to evaluate three latent dimensions of identification (*cognitive empathy, emotional empathy and the sensation of becoming the character or merging*). Response options were based on a 5-point Likert-type scales formulated as “1 = *strongly disagree*” and “5 = *strongly agree*.” To assess cognitive empathy, participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements: “I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko”, “I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko”, “I tried to imagine Mirko’s feelings, thoughts and reactions”, “I tried to see things I from Mirko’s point of view”. Emotional empathy was assessed by 3 items: “I felt emotionally involved with Mirkos’s feelings”, “I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels”, “I understood Mirko’s feelings or emotions”. The sensation of becoming the character or merging was assessed by 4 items: “I felt as if I were Mirko”, “I myself experienced Mirko’s emotional reaction”, “I had the impression of living Mirko’s story myself”, “I identified with Mirko”.

Translation of the Igartua's (2010) EDI scale: Following the instructions prescribed by Coccossis (2001) as well as Costa et al., (2007), the adaptation of the scale was based on the translation and backward-translation method. The translation consisted of three steps:

In the first step, the original scale was translated by two native Serbian bilingual translators. The two translators were requested to achieve the highest possible equivalence of the concepts with the original scale. The bilingual translators were also warned to avoid any literal translation, considering the colloquial and natural expression of both languages.

The second step or retranslation means that the resulting Serbian version was translated back into English by two independent English bilingual translators.

Furthermore, an independent bilingual translator analyzed the possible discrepancies comparing the Serbian version with the original scale making an overall assessment of comprehension of each item.

The two bilingual translators were asked to find other words (if necessary) or any other alternative expressions if they found any difficulty in understanding the meaning of the statements from the scale.

The final step was carried out by composing of the expert team as crucial for the achievement of the cultural equivalence of the translated instruments. The professional team was consisted of two social psychologists, one communication researcher, and four translators (who participated in translation) as well as the person who made the synthesis of translations.

Contact (quantity and quality of intergroup contact): Following the instructions of Pettigrew and Tropp, (2006, 2011), the measurement of contact hypothesis with persons of homosexual orientation is operationalized through the degree of familiarity with the person of homosexual orientation. The contact as a concept was assessed by distinguishing the quality and quantity as separate variables of established relations with the homosexual persons (Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007). To assess the existence of contact, the participants were asked whether they had any friends amongst homosexuals. Response options were based on two possible answers: 1. If yes, indicate how many and 2. None.

To quantify the frequency of the contact, the participants were asked how often they generally interacted with homosexuals of any gender. Response options were based on 5 possible answers (everyday, several times a week, several times a month, several times a year or less than above mentioned).

To measure quality of the contact the participants were asked to evaluate the quality of relationships and the extent of intimacy with the homosexual persons. In case the participants knew someone who was gay, they were asked to assess the relation with the gay person as: close, pleasant or equal. The degree of quality was measured by marking within the box on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The box was the lowest degree of quality and 5 the highest level of quality.

The third person effect: Measurement of the third person effect typically involves exposing participants to the current media message (through videos, newspaper clippings), in which the participants are asked to assess the effects of that message on "self" and "others". To measure the third-person effect, the present study followed the typical approach proposed by (Conners, 2005).

The classic approach to measuring the third person effect involves setting up two 3 questions to the participants. The first set of questions concerns their evaluation and relevance of the effects of the film on themselves, and the other one is related to their evaluation of the effects of the message on others.

Following the described scheme, the participants were asked in separate questions to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statements: “This story is relevant to me”, “I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way” and “I think that other people might be positively affected by this film”. The participants gave their assessment on a five-point Likert scale with the responses ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree".

According to Connors (2005), the third person effect is typically operationalized as the difference between the perception of the effects of the message on other people and on oneself. The third person effect is confirmed if the respondents report that other people are under the influence of the mass media more than themselves. These scores are then compared in order to identify significant differences between the estimated effect of media messages on oneself and on others.

Religiosity: In accordance with Zivanovic et al., (2014), measurement of the degree of religiosity of participants was assessed by only one item. The participants were asked to evaluate to what extant religion played important role in their life. The degree of expressed religiosity was measured by marking within the box on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Box 1 was the lowest degree of religiosity and 5 the highest level of expressed importance of religion in their life.

Evaluation of the film: was measured by a single item: "I liked the film". The scale used to assess to what extent the participants liked the film was a 5-item Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Control variables: were based on socio-demographic information such as gender (male/female), age and nationality (Serbian, Croat, Bosnian, Other). Furthermore, the participants were asked to indicate their own sexual orientation. In this regard, they were offered the following three answers: heterosexual, homosexual or other.

4.5.2 Questionnaire construction

In order to approach the objectives of our study we constructed a questionnaire that consisted of several sets of questions. In the first section (pre-test) of it was illustrated and explained how to answer the questions. Further on, the second section contained basic demographic data, and included general information about gender, age, the degree of religiosity of the participant and homophobia scale. In order to dissimulate the real purpose of the study, the third section introduced some general questions regarding cinematographic preferences such as: "What kind of films you like, what genre you prefer, what characters you find interesting more than others, etc". In the forth section (post-test) we focused on questions related to the real purpose of the present research. In that context, we introduced scale measuring homophobia, and questions assessing the quality and quantity of the contact with gay people, the third person effect and identification with the characters as the central variable of our research. Finally, the used questionnaire was based on closed questions, written in Serbian, and presented in paper format. An English version of the questionnaire is available in the annexes.

In constructing the questionnaire for the present study, we followed the methodological prescriptions of Havelka, Kuzmanovic and Popadic (2004). In that context, we focused on the following aspects: 1) General information containing answers to the questions: what is tested, who organized the testing, for which purpose the testing is carried out, and what the research result will serve for. 2) Special instructions: referring to the method of completing the questionnaire. Participants are explained how to respond in view of multiple options in answering the questions. Specific instruction: indicating that there are no correct or incorrect answers.

4.5.3 Formulation of the questions

In major part of the constructed questionnaire we used scales as well determined instruments of psychometric measurement.

As we also used some other closed questions, we ensured the compliance with the criteria prescribed by previous researches (Babbie, 2001; Havelka et al., 2004; Fehily & Johns, 2004; Schaeffer & Presser, 2003): 1) to avoid difficult and complex questions that require long time of cognitive elaboration and comprehension. 2) Not to use complicated and unclear words and expressions. 3) To guarantee the anonymity, and to establish a friendly and trustful relationship with the participants in order to avoid giving socially desirable responses. 4) Not to ask hypothetical questions. 5) Employment of psychological strategy in formulation of the questions (At the beginning of the questionnaire, the questions are more general, more interesting and easier for answering. More specific, subject-related questions are posted after the easier ones. 6) Use of logical strategy (questions related to one specific subject are grouped in one place). 7) Formulation of closed questions, since they are more appropriate for achieving efficient and accurate answers. Ensuring testing conditions in which the participants are not subjected to disruptive factors (noise). 8) Finally, the questionnaire should contain only questions that yield answers particularly used in the present research.

4.5.4 Audiovisual stimulus [32]

The stimulus was the film *The Parade* (2011) was selected for the purposes of the present study as a film depicting a group of gay men in a positive way.

The film (115 min) portrays a group of gay activists who try to organize the Pride Parade in Belgrade. Organizing such a parade is no easy task in Serbia as evidenced by the violence at the 2001 parade attempt. Now, almost a decade later, the situation is not much better - nationalist and right wing groups create just as much threat in spite of repeated attempts to organize the parade. As a gay couple, Mirko and his boyfriend Radmilo although try to live discreetly, both still experience various forms of abuse from the homophobic Serbian majority. In parallel, we meet Limun, a homophobic 40 year old Serbian war criminal. Limun as a Balkan macho man lives with Biserka, a much younger and open-minded girl running a beauty shop.

The paths of the two couples cross when Biserka hires Mirko to organize her and Limun's wedding. The eventual meeting of the two couples goes horribly wrong with Limun's violent and homophobic nature emerging just in front of the gay couple (Mirko and Radmilo). As a result, Biserka decides to leave Limun because of his homophobic behavior, but calls Mirko in order to apologize. Radmilo picks up the phone and while learning of the circumstances of Biserka's and Limun's situation realizes an opportunity and makes a plan.

He then shows up at Limun's agency/judo club offering Mirko's services in organizing the wedding party for Limun and Biserka in return for Limun's personnel securing the gay parade. Limun reluctantly accepts, and though Biserka returns to him as a result of the new development, he's now got another problem as his staff members refuse to protect homosexuals.

Put in a tight spot, Limun thinks of hiring his former enemies from the Yugoslav Wars. Limun and Radmilo embark on a recruiting trip all over ex-Yugoslavia.

[32] For detailed information on the film , see Appendix B.

Unfortunately, in attempting to help, Limun dies during the gay parade together with Mirko in a brutal fight with homophobic football hooligans.

Considering that film as a narrative fiction has the power to shape and change real-world beliefs and attitudes, we chose film *The Parade* for several concrete and pragmatic reasons. This film is, according to Petrovic (2013), the first creation with the topic of homosexuality and homophobia made in the territory of former Yugoslavia. The film also brings an affirmative and positive representation of homosexuality. Furthermore, the characters in the film generally can be divided into homosexual and heterosexual, where the principle conflict is originated. The interesting thing is that neither side in this film is represented as an entirely good or entirely bad. In fact, all the protagonists in this film are presented as a kind of charming losers who do not accept each other and condemn each other.

5. Results

5.1 Measuring prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation with H25 scale

We measured prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation by employing recently developed and validated H25 scale of homophobia that consists of 25 items (Zivanovic et al., 2014). Zivanovic and associates (2014) reported that this scale shows excellent internal reliability (α =.97) and that it measures two highly correlated underlying dimensions or aspects of homophobia, which can be interpreted as “homosexuality as a threat to a society” and “homosexuality as a threat to me”. The high correlation between the underlying dimensions indicated that the scale actually measures one phenomenon, i.e. homophobia as reported by the authors. Before conducting any further analysis we wanted to check psychometric properties of the H25 scale on our sample and compare them with the results of Zivanovic et al (2014). We conducted these analysis on the data obtained in the pretest phase of the study, as it included greater number of participants and was not preceded nor influenced by the film projection.

As the separate components of homophobic attitude should rather be regarded as highly correlated manifestations of homophobia, than its distinct aspects, this finding also justified calculation of a particular summary score on the test.

Table 14 shows the comparative analysis of the internal metric characteristics of the scale of homophobia. In Table 14 we present obtained measures of representativeness, reliability, homogeneity and validity of individual items.

Table 14. *Measures of representativeness, reliability, homogeneity and validity of each item*

Item	*r*	α	*H*	*B*
I would never insult gays.	0.99	.65	.68	.68
Any action against gay people for me is unacceptable.	0.99	.58	.66	.67
If we were well organized, we could re-educate homosexuals.	1.00	.43	.65	.65
I would cooperate with persons of homosexual orientation.	0.98	.64	.78	.78
Homosexuality should be eradicated.	0.99	.67	.79	.81
I don't understand why some people are so disgusted at the mention of gay population.	0.99	.55	.69	.69
I do not see why should sex among gay population be seen as something dirty.	0.99	.77	.83	.83
It does not bother me to see a film with homosexual themes.	1.00	.66	.76	.76
When I see gays I feel sick and my heart starts beating.	0.99	.62	.73	.73
It disgusts me when I see two people of the same sex passionately kissing.	1.00	.57	.69	.73
The fact that somebody is homosexual does not prevent me to appreciate him as a person.	1.00	.69	.75	.74
Being gay does not mean being less valuable.	0.99	.70	.72	.73
I do not judge people based on who they go to bed with.	1.00	.55	.71	.71
A homosexual is only politically correct name for a fagot.	0.99	.65	.80	.80
Homosexuals are not people worthy of respect.	1.00	.68	.76	.76
Gay is OK.	1.00	.79	.89	.89
It is unacceptable that a civilized society persecutes homosexuals				

as if they were beasts.	1.00	.65	.74	.78
Homosexuals should be isolated in order not to destroy our society.	1.00	.67	.77	.76
Homosexuals are a tumor of any society.	1.00	.82	.86	.85
Being gay is immoral.	0.99	.72	.85	.84
If I were gay, I would be proud about it.	1.00	.62	.73	.73
I'd rather kill myself than be a gay.	1.00	.60	.75	.75
If I was attracted to persons of the same sex, I would ignore it and try to be normal.	0.99	.42	.60	.60
If I were gay, I'd feel ashamed to go out to the street.	0.99	.58	.79	.78
A mere thought of an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex is frightening to me.	0.99	.58	.70	.69

Note: *r* - Kaiser-Rice measure of representative items; *α* - the reliability of items; *H*-homogeneity (validity in Hotteling space); *B* - validity in Burt's area.

The value of Cronbach alpha coefficient for the H25 scale was α =.979 and it was basically the same as the one that Zivanovic et al (2014) reported, indicating excellent internal reliability of the scale. On average participants in our sample reported mild homophobia (M = 3.35[33], SD=0.82, N=200). Distribution of the homophobia score was symmetric, but slightly platykurtic as indicated by the standardized Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients (ZSk = 0.78, ZKu = - 2.75*), deviating in such manner only slightly from the normal distribution model. In addition, the results indicate that participants showed more compliance with the cognitive aspects of H 25 scale (*Social threat*, *Hatred and Experience of revulsion*), while the personal and

[33] The theoretical range of the homophobia scale was from 1 to 5 and theoretical mean was 3.

emotional relevance of the story (*Ego defense*) was significantly less affected (reduced) by the film.

In order to explore the construct validity of the scale we conducted an exploratory factor analysis and compared obtained results with the results of Zivanovic et al., (2014). Following the analysis of these authors we applied the Maximum likelihood method of factor extraction with Promax rotation. Similarly to authors, we applied the Kaiser's criterion to determine the number of relevant factors and obtained two highly correlated factors that explained 85% of total variance. The first factor explained 79% of variance and the correlation between the factors was $r = .815$[34] indicating that the two factors could be considered as two highly related manifestations of the homophobia and not as its distinctive aspects. Zivanovic and colleagues (2014) obtained very similar findings. In addition, such pattern of results, together with the high internal consistency of the scale, justified the decision to use the average score on H25 scale as an indicator of the prejudice towards gay people.

Furthermore, we directly tested the theoretical model that Zivanovic and colleagues (2014) proposed by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS statistical package (Byrne, 2001). Unfortunately the model with two highly correlated latent factors demonstrated poor fit ($\chi 2$ (274) = 4013.49, $p < .001$, GFI = .38, CFI = .66, RMSEA = .26). Having this in mind, we also tested the one factor solution, but the results again indicated poor fit ($\chi 2$ (275) = 4027.91, $p < .001$, GFI = .38, CFI = .66, RMSEA = .26). Although the exploratory factor analysis confirmed the construct validity of the H25 scale, the results of the confirmatory factory analysis did not. There is a possibility that relatively small sample in comparison to the number of estimated parameters (200 participants vs 50 parameters) contributed to the poor fit.

[34] In the original paper it was $r = .76$ (Zivanovic et al., 2014).

However, due to the fact that the exploratory factor analysis offered similar results to the original tests, we decided to continue with the study.

Finally, we wanted to check whether the level of prejudice toward gay people expressed by the score on the H25 scale was related to different socio-demographic variables: (1) gender (2) nationality status (national majority vs minority) (3) religion status (religious majority vs minority).

We were interested to find out whether the gender as a potential predictor of level of homophobia had a significant role before and after viewing the film, as this was one of our hypotheses (***H5***). The results revealed that there was a significant difference between women and men in the level of homophobia (t (198) = 2.60, p = .01). Men expressed higher level of homophobia (M = 3.45, SD = 0.79) than women did (M = 3.17, SD = 0.83).This gender difference was also confirmed in the case of homophobia level after the film projection (t(198)= 2.22, p = .03). As predicted by our hypothesis (***H5***), men again expressed higher level of homophobia (M = 2.92, SD = 0.84) than woman did (M = 2.65, SD = 0.80). This finding was also in line with the results of Zivanovic et al., (2014). However, although men expressed higher level of homophobia than women, there was no significant difference in the level of expressed identification with the character. Men (M = 3.77, SD = 0.60) and women (M = 3.81, SD = 0.59) achieved similar levels of identification with the character.

We were also interested whether the level of homophobia was positively related to the level of religiosity as this was one of our hypotheses. In line with our hypothesis (***H6***), we found that participants who reported greater level of religiosity[35] tended to demonstrate greater level of homophobia (r(200) = .303, p< .001). In addition, there was a noteworthy difference in the

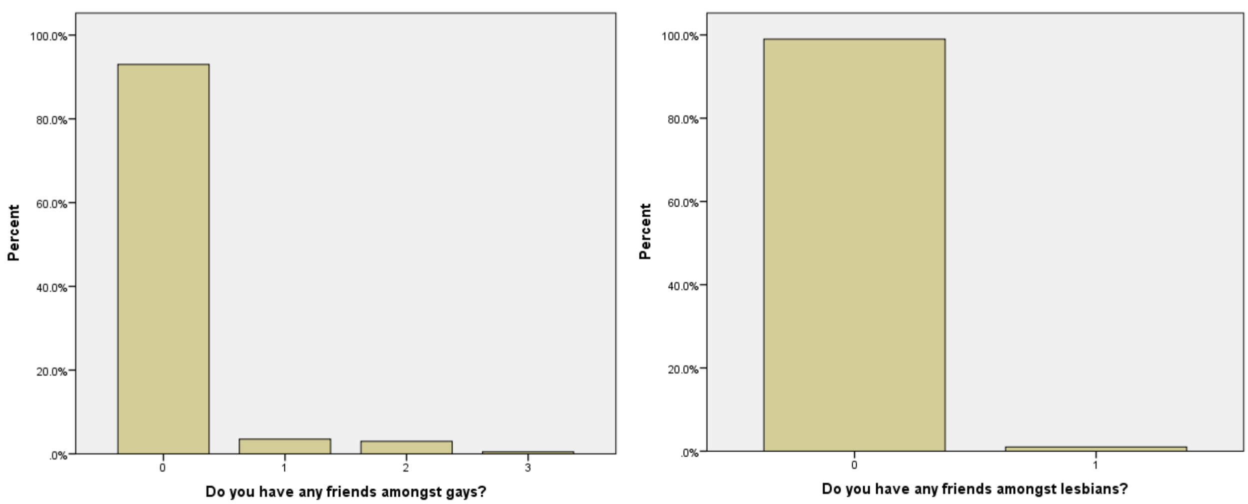
[35] Measured with the Likert scale type of item: “Religion plays an important role in my life”.

homophobia level between students of different nationality and religion status (Christians vs Muslims). Muslim participants expressed higher level of homophobia (M = 3.61, SD = 0.79) than Christian participants (M = 3.17, SD = 0.91).

5.2 Quality and quantity of the contact with persons of homosexual orientation

With regard to ***quantity of contact*** majority of the sample reported they do not get into contact with either women or men of homosexual orientation (see Figure 1 below). More specifically, only 14 participants reported to have gay friends (7% of the sample), and 2 of them said to have lesbian friends (1% of the sample), while the rest of the sample said that they do not have any gay or lesbian friends.

Figure 2. *Percentages of participants with homosexual friends*



In general, majority of the sample reported that they rarely interact with homosexuals (94.5% of the sample reported to interact with homosexuals less than several times a month).

Moreover, 3.5% of the semple said that they interact with homosexuals several times a month, 2% reported to interact several times a week, and only 1.5% said that they interact with homosexuals on a daily basis.

In line with the above described data, *the quality of contact* with persons of homosexual orientation was generally described as distant, unpleasant, unequal and poor. Means and standard deviations that illustrate such finding are presented in Table 15 below. Although the quality of contact was generally low, it was slightly better on all parameters in case of contact with lesbians than gay people (see Table 15).

Table 15. *Descriptive statistics for different indicators of quality of contact with persons of homosexual orientation (N=200)*

	M	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Closeness of contact with gay people	1.17	0.65	1	4
Closeness of contact with lesbian persons	1.56	0.58	1	4
Pleasantness of contact with gay people	1.25	0.93	1	5
Pleasantness of contact with lesbian persons	1.56	0.61	1	5
Equality in contact with gay people	1.22	0.83	1	5
Equality in contact with lesbian persons	1.56	0.61	1	5
Lack of contact with gay people	4.66	0.96	1	5
Lack of contact with lesbian persons	4.37	0.67	2	5

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *Min* = Minimal value; *Max* = Maximum value; The range of the scale was 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree.

5.3 Relationships between the quantity and quality of contact and prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation

In order to explore the relationships between the quantity and quality of contact and prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation we tested the correlations between different variables that operationalized these constructs and conducted a multiple linear regression analysis. Similarly to previous analysis, we chose the initial homophobia score (obtained before the film projection) as we thought that it represents purer measures of the prejudice toward homosexuals (purer in a sense that it was not influenced by the film projection).

Table 16. *Correlations between different indicators of quantity and quality of contact with persons of homosexual orientation and the level of homophobia (N=200)*

	Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
1.1. Quantity of contact		
Number of friends among gays	**-.283****	<.001
Number of friends among lesbians	**-.154***	.029
Frequency of interactions	**-.305****	<.001
1.2. Quality of contact		
Closeness of contact with gay people	**-.302****	<.001
Closeness of contact with lesbian persons	.018	.805
Pleasantness of contact with gay people	**-.313****	<.001
Pleasantness of contact with lesbian persons	.005	0.942
Equality in contact with gay people	**-.312****	<.001
Equality in contact with lesbian persons	.005	0.942
Lack of contact with gay people	**.287****	<.001
Lack of contact with lesbian persons	.023	0.748

Note. r= correlation coefficient; *p* = statistical significance; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

As shown in Table 16, and in line with one of our hypothesis (***H3***), homophobia score was significantly and negatively related to quantity of contact with both gay men and lesbian persons. In general, people with greater number of homosexual friends and greater interaction and contact with homosexual persons tended to be less homophobic.

However the magnitude of this relationship was somewhat lower for the quantity of contact with lesbian friends. At the same time, the quality of contact with gay, but not lesbian persons was negatively related to the level of homophobia (see Table 16). Those who evaluated the quality of contact with gay people as more close, pleasant and equal also tended to be less homophobic. Such pattern of results is in line with usual predictions of the contact theory.

In order to check for the unique contribution of different dimensions of the quantity and quality of the contact to prediction of homophobia level we conducted the stepwise multiple regression analysis in which the quality and quantity of contact with gay people were predictors and homophobia score was used as a criterion. The analysis yielded a significant regression model that explained only 9.8% of variance in homophobia score (R =.313, $F(1, 198)$ =21.50 , p<.001). The low score of the model also indicates that other factors besides contact with gay people are important determinants of lower homophobia.The only significant predictor was the pleasantness of the contact with gay people (β =-0.31, t =-4.64, p <.001), while the other predictors turned to be redundant. This means that pleasantness of the contact plays an important role with regard to determination of the level of prejudice towards gays.

5. 4 Evaluation of the film "Parade"

In general, most participants evaluated the film "Parade" in a positive manner (see Table 3). On average, they reported they liked and enjoyed the film. More importantly, when asked how other people might evaluate this film and any film in which gay people are represented in a positive way, they also responded positively. Regarding the assessment of the adequacy of representation of both homosexual and heterosexual persons in the film, participants were more reserved. On average, they reported slight agreement with the adequacy of homosexual person representation and slight disagreement with the adequacy of heterosexual person representation (Table 17).

Table 17. *Descriptive statistics of different aspects of film evaluation (N=150)*

	M	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
I liked the film	4.10	0.79	2	5
I enjoyed the film	4.07	0.94	2	5
The representation of the homosexual persons is adequate	3.60	0.81	2	5
The representation of the heterosexual persons is adequate	2.63	0.82	2	5
I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way	4.02	0.70	3	5
I think that other people might be positively affected by this film	4.36	0.71	3	5

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *Min* = Minimal value; *Max* = Maximum value; The range of the scale was 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree.

We were also interested to find out whether different aspects of film evaluation were related to the quality and quantity of previous contact with homosexual persons. We formed an aggregated score of contact quantity that encompassed the number of gay and lesbian friends and frequency of interaction with them[36]. In addition, we formed one score of quality of contact with gay/lesbian persons that encompassed items of contact equality, closeness and pleasantness[37]. The correlations between these scores and different aspects of film evaluation are presented in Table 18 bellow.

As can be seen from the table the quality and quantity of contact are positively related to film evaluation. The more someone has contact with gay people and the more this contact is positive, the higher is the probability that they would like, enjoy and positively evaluate the film "Parade". Interestingly this relationship was not true for the quality of contact with lesbian persons.

Table 18 *Correlations between different aspects of film evaluation and quality and quantity of contact with homosexual persons (N=150)*

	Quantity	*Quality_gay*	*Quality_lesbian*
I liked the film	**.294****	**.307****	-.080
I enjoyed the film	**.280****	**.291****	-.105
The representation of the homosexual persons is adequate	**.366****	**.370****	-.080
The representation of the heterosexual persons is adequate	**.181***	.131	.148
I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way	.123	.033	.158
I think that other people might be positively affected by this film	**.197***	**.206***	.055

Note. Cells contain Pearsons correlation coefficients; significant correlations are written in bold letters; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

[36] The satisfactory level of Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = .734$) for the three indicators of quantity of contact allowed us to form one summary score of contact quantity that we used in some of the subsequent analysis.
[37] Cronbach alphas for the scales of quality of contact with gays was $\alpha = .982$ and for contact with lesbians was $\alpha = .998$

5.5 Identification with the protagonist (Mirko) of the film "Parade"

The scale that we used to measure different aspects of identification with the protagonist of the film was developed by Igartua (2010) and consisted of 11 items.

After conducting a second order factor analysis, the authors concluded that the scale measures one general factor of identification that can consists of three related subdimensions (Emotional empathy, Cognitive empathy and Sensation of becoming the character or merging). In our study, this scale demonstrated solid reliability as expressed by Cronbach alpha (α = .934) which allowed us to calculate an average score which served as a general measure of the identification in the analysis that follow. This decision was also in line with the hierarchical model that Igartua (2010) proposed (i.e. one general factor with three subfactors). On average, participants who watched the film demonstrated moderate identification with the film protagonist (M = 3.82, SD = 0.59).

Descriptive statistics for individual items of the identification scale are presented in Table 19 below. As we can see from the table, participants generally felt to understand the protagonist's thoughts and feelings. They were somewhat more reserved regarding their feeling of merger with the character.

Table 19 *Descriptive statistics for individual items of the identification scale (N=150)*

	M	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
I felt emotionally involved with Mirko's (the protagonist) feelings	3.53	0.55	3	5
I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels	4.25	0.76	2	5
I understood Mirko's feelings or emotions	4.18	0.78	2	5
I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko	3.76	0.75	2	5
I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko	3.96	0.85	2	5

I tried to imagine Mirko's feelings, thoughts and reactions	3.78	0.78	2	5
I tried to see things I from Mirko's point of view	3.95	0.80	2	5
I felt as if I were Mirko	3.39	0.66	2	5
I myself experienced Mirko's emotional reaction	4.15	0.67	2	5
I had the impression of living Mirko's story myself	3.77	0.82	2	5
I identified with Mirko	3.39	0.93	1	5

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *Min* = Minimal value; *Max* = Maximum value; The range of the scale was 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree.

In order to test the construct validity of the scale we conducted both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and compared the obtained results with the original hierarchical factor structure that the authors of the scale reported (see Igartua et al., 2010). The exploratory factor analysis (principle component analysis with Varimax rotation) yielded a three factor solution. Extracted factors explained 83.1% of total variance. We present the factor loadings in Table 20.

Table 20. *Rotated factor matrix for the identification scale (N=150)*

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*	*Factor 3*
I felt emotionally involved with Mirko's (the protagonist) feelings	**.842**	.387	-.133
I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels	.451	**.773**	.189
I understood Mirko's feelings or emotions	.486	**.605**	.359
I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko	.094	.226	**.919**
I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko	**.851**	.237	.195
I tried to imagine Mirko's feelings, thoughts and reactions	.246	**.823**	.250
I tried to see things I from Mirko's point of view	.438	.318	**.787**
I felt as if I were Mirko	**.792**	.173	.368
I myself experienced Mirko's emotional reaction	.137	**.855**	.151
I had the impression of living Mirko's story myself	**.879**	.232	.185
I identified with Mirko	**.812**	.260	.329

Items loaded mainly on Factor 2 while cognitive empathy factor loaded on Factor 3 (see Table 20 above). Items from the "sensation of becoming a character" subscale loaded mainly on Factor 1. Emotional empathy). However the factor structure did not completely match the structure that Igartua and colleagues (2010) reported. Therefore, in order to directly test the theoretical model that these authors proposed, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis with the program AMOS (Byrne, 2001).

Unfortunately the model had negative error variances and the solution was not admissible. This situation is known in the literature as Haywood case, and according to Joreskog and Sorborn (1984), it might come as a result of a small sample or wrong model (model that do not fit the data at all. However, due to the fact that the exploratory factor analysis offered similar results to the original tests, we decided to continue with the study.

We also wanted to test the relationship between the film identification and different parameters of contact with gay and lesbian persons as we hypothesized that students with more contact with gay people will acquire higher level of identification with the tragic protagonist from the film "Parade" (***H4***). In line with our hypothesis, we obtained positive correlation between the identification and the quantity of contact with homosexual persons (r (150) = .329, p<.001). People who had more contact with homosexual persons were more likely to identify with the protagonist of the film "Parade". We also found positive correlation between the quality of contact with gay people and the level of positive evaluation of the film (r(150)= .325, p<.001). Positive contact was followed by higher identification with the film's main character. Finally, the relationship between the level of identification and the quality of contact with lesbian persons was not significant.

5.6 Relationships between different aspects of experience with the film (evaluation of the story and identification with the protagonist) and prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation

Having in mind that the main topic and overall content of the film dealt with the issue of prejudice toward gay people, it made sense to explore the relationships between different aspects of experience with the film and the level of prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation.

We explored these relationships by testing simple Pearson correlations between the variables that represented these constructs. Additionally, we conducted a multiple regression analysis to see which aspects of experience with the film were most uniquely related to the homophobia level.

In Table 21, we begin with the presentation of the correlation coefficients between the score on homophobia scale and different items of film evaluation. As we can see from the table, all aspects of film evaluation were negatively connected to the level of homophobia.

The higher level of homophobia was followed by less positive evaluation of the film. The correlations were only low when it came to assessment of adequacy of representation of the heterosexual person in the film.

In addition, the correlation between the level of homophobia and assessment of other's people attitudes towards a film that portrays homosexual characters in a positive manner was also significant.

Table 21. *Correlations between different aspects of experience with the film and the level of homophobia (N=150)*

	Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
I liked the film	**-.720****	<.001
I enjoyed the film	**-.768****	<.001
The representation of the homosexual persons is adequate	**-.729****	<.001
The representation of the heterosexual persons is adequate	**-.243****	.003

Note. r= correlation coefficient; *p* = statistical significance; * *p* < .05. ** *p*< .01.

Furthermore, the level of homophobia was also highly positively correlated with the third person effect as predicted by our hypothesis (***H7***). Pearson correlation coefficient between the averaged third person effect score and homophobia score was $r(150) = -.861$, $p<.001$ indicating that the participants who were more homophobic were more likely to assess attitudes of other people as potentially positive toward the film story. In the Table 22 below we present the simple correlations between the individual items of the third person effect and homophobia score[38].

Table 22. *Correlations between the third person effect and homophobia score (N=150)*

	Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
I think that the representation of the homosexual persons is adequate	**-.880****	<.001
I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way	**-.727****	<.001
I think that other people might be positively affected by this film	**-.868****	<.001
This story is relevant to me	**-.686****	<.001

Note. r= correlation coefficient; *p* = statistical significance; significant correlations are written in bold letters;* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.

[38] We did not conduct multiple regression analysis with individual items of both the third person effect and the identification scale due to high multi-colinearity of the predictors.

Finally we tested the relationship between the average score on identification scale and the level of homophobia. Pearson correlation coefficient was r (150) = -.907, p<.001. The higher level of homophobia was followed by the lower level of identification with the protagonist. In other words, participants who were more identified with the tragic gay male protagonists, showed more favorable attitude toward gay people. This finding confirmed our second hypothesis (***H2***). In the Table 23 below we present the simple correlations between the individual items of the identification scale and homophobia score.

Table 23. *Correlations between different aspects of film identification and homophobia score (N=150)*

	Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
I felt emotionally involved with Mirko's (the protagonist) feelings	**-.668****	<.001
I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels	**-.756****	<.001
I understood Mirko’s feelings or emotions	**-.837****	<.001
I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko	**-.509****	<.001
I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko	**-.727****	<.001
I tried to imagine Mirko's feelings, thoughts and reactions	**-.671****	<.001
I tried to see things I from Mirko’s point of view	**-.833****	<.001
I felt as if I were Mirko	**-.715****	<.001
I myself experienced Mirko’s emotional reaction	**-.463****	<.001
I had the impression of living Mirko’s story myself	**-.754****	<.001
I identified with Mirko	**-.797****	<.001

Note. r= correlation coefficient; p = statistical significance; significant correlations are written in bold letters; * p < .05. ** p < .01.

In the end, we conducted a multiple regression analysis in which we regressed the average score on film evaluation, the third person effect and identification scale on homophobia level. We obtained a significant model that explained 85% of variance in the homophobia level (R = .924, F(3, 146) = 292.99 , p< .001).

As expected, all predictors were statistically significant and independently contributed to explanation of variance in the homophobia level. Beta coefficients with corresponding level of significance are presented in Table 24 below.

Table 24. *Predicting homophobia on the basis of film evaluation, the third person effect and identification: Results of multiple regression analysis*

	β	t	P
Film evaluation average score	**-0.19**	**-2.87**	**.005**
The third person effect	**-0.25**	**-3.74**	**<.001**
Identification average score	**-0.53**	**-7.08**	**<.001**

Note. β = standardized regression coefficient; t = t statistic; p = level of significance for the t statistic. Significant predictors are written in bold letters.

5.7 The change in the level of prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation after educational film projection

In order to test whether the film projection (i.e. experimental condition) influenced the level of prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation, we conducted the T-test analysis. First, we tested the difference between the level of homophobia before (pretest) and after the film projection (posttest) in the experimental group. There was a significant drop in the level of homophobia after the film projection (t (149) = 25.30, p< .001). Secondly, we tested the same difference in homophobia score in the control group. There was also a statistically significant drop in the level of homophobia despite the fact that this group did not attend the film projection ($t(49) = 2.45$, $p = .018$).

However, this difference was significantly less prominent than the one obtained after the film projection ($t\ (172) = 23.54$, $p<.001$). Finally, we tested the hypothesis (***H1***) that the participants exposed experimentally to the feature film "The Parade" (encouraging a favourable attitude towards gay people), compared with a control group, will show a more favourable attitude towards gay people. T-test confirmed this hypothesis ($t(198) = -6.25$, $p<.001$). The students from the control group expressed higher level of homophobia compared with the experimental group. Means and standard deviations of the homophobia score in the experimental and control group in the pretest and posttest phase of the study are presented in Table 25.

Table 25. *Means(and standard deviations) of the homophobia score in different groups and phases of the study*

	Pretest score	*Posttest score*	*Differential score*
Experimental group	3.35(0.81)	2.61(0.79)	**-0.72**(0.35)
Control group	3.41(0.86)	3.39(0.83)	**-0.02**(0.06)

Note. The cells contain means and corresponding standard deviations in brackets; Differential score = Posttest score – Pretest score.

Additionally, we wanted to check if the change in level of homophobia as a consequence of film projection depended on gender, nationality (national majority vs minority) and religion (religious majority vs minority) and religiousness. There was no difference in the level of change in homophobia between women and men. Also, we did not find the difference in the influence of film projection on people of different religious and nationality status. Finally, there was no connection between the level of change in homophobia after the film projection and the level of religiousness. Such overall pattern of results suggests relative robustness and generalizability of the effect of educational films on changing level of prejudice in the case of homophobia.

5.8 Predictors of the decrease in prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation after viewing the film

One of the most important goals of this analysis was to observe what aspects of experience with the film projection influenced the decrease in the level of homophobia[39]. In addition we wanted to check whether the quality and quantity of contact with people of homosexual orientation was relevant for the change in homophobia level after the film projection.

We explored Pearson correlations and conducted a multiple regression analysis to discover the best predictors of the decrease in homophobia level.

First we explored correlations between different items of film evaluation and the change in homophobia score (see Table 26). Interestingly, participants who expressed their opinion that other people might evaluate the film "Parade" and other films that depict gay people in a positive way were less likely to lower their level of homophobia after the film projection. Furthermore, those who were more prone to think that the heterosexual character was portrayed in an adequate manner were also less likely to decrease their level of homophobia.

This pattern of results make sense if we take into account the high negative correlation between the average score on homophobia scale and film evaluation items. More precisely, those who evaluated the film in a positive manner were probably more likely to be less homophobic in

[39] The decrease in homophobia level was defined as a differential score that was obtained by subtracting the homophobia score after the film projection from the score before the film projection.

the first place and consequentially did not make such a prominent change in their level of homophobia after the film projection.

In order to test this hypothesis we explored the correlation between the initial level of homophobia and the level of change after the film projection. We obtained significant positive correlation (*r*(150) = .413, *p*< .001). This basically means that people who were less homophobic were at the same time less likely to change their attitudes toward gay people after the film projection.

Table 26. *Correlations between different aspects of film evaluation, the third person effect and the level of decrease in homophobia score (N=150)*

	Decrease in Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
I liked the film	.001	.986
I enjoyed the film	.041	.622
The representation of the homosexual persons is adequate	-.070	.392
The representation of the heterosexual persons is adequate	**-.215****	**.008**
I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way	**-.184***	**.024**
I think that other people might be positively affected by this film	**-.470****	**<.001**

Note. r= correlation coefficient; *p* = statistical significance; * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01.Significant correlations are written in bold letters.

Furthermore, we wanted to check whether different aspects of the identification with the characters were a potential mechanism of the change in homophobia level. The correlation between the change in homophobia level and the average score on the identification scale was not significant (*r*(150) = -.101, *p* = .217). In addition, we explored simple Pearson correlation coefficients between the scale items and change in the score on homophobia scale (see Table 27).

The only positive correlation was between the item “I myself experienced Mirko’s emotional reaction” and the level of decrease in homophobia. In other words, those who were more likely to experience protagonist’ emotional reaction were also more likely to decrease their level of homophobia after the film projection.

Surprisingly, those who claimed greater understanding of Mirko’s feelings and emotions and said to imagine how would act if they were Mirko and tried to see things from Mirko’s point of view were less likely to decrease their level of homophobia after the film projection.

Similarly to the findings on the film evaluation scale, this result should be interpreted in the context of high correlation between the score on homophobia scale and items on identification with the protagonist scale.

More specifically, it seems that those who claimed to understand the protagonist’ emotions, were more likely to be less homophobic in the first place and consequentially did not make such a prominent change in their level of homophobia after the film projection.

Table 27. *Correlations between different aspects of film identification and the level of change in homophobia score (N=150)*

	Decrease in Homophobia score	
	r	*p*
I felt emotionally involved with Mirko's (the protagonist) feelings	-.033	.691
I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels	-.033	.687
I understood Mirko’s feelings or emotions	**-.245****	**.002**
I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko	**-.211****	**.010**
I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko	.042	.614
I tried to imagine Mirko's feelings, thoughts and reactions	.005	.953
I tried to see things I from Mirko’s point of view	**-.372****	**<.001**
I felt as if I were Mirko	-.005	.954

I myself experienced Mirko's emotional reaction	**.237****	**.003**
I had the impression of living Mirko's story myself	-.125	.127
I identified with Mirko	-.072	.381

Note. *r*= correlation coefficient; *p* = statistical significance; * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.Significant correlations are written in bold letters.

Finally, we checked whether different dimensions of quality and quantity of contact correlated with the decrease in homophobia level after the film projection. We obtained no significant relationship.

6. Discussion

In this chapter we will present an interpretation of the data analysis from the previous chapter. The main purpose of this study, as we suggested earlier, was to identify, analyze and explain the factors, mechanisms and persuasive processes involved in the cause of possible change in attitude in a specific culture such as Serbian. For this purpose we used as a stimulus, film "The Parade" in order to observe the attitude change towards gay people.

Here we refer to the authors and their theories to affirm or deny the results of our empirical research regarding the theories explained in the preliminary theoretical framework, trying to answer questions like: what are the theories, affirmations or authors, the present results align with? What theory denies contradicts or goes in a different direction with respect to our findings? To what theory, the present results add information?

The main idea of this chapter is to contextualize the results that we obtained on the basis of the empirical research.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that viewers exposed to positive representation of gay people will show a more favorable attitude towards gay people. The results provided evidence that, after viewing the film, the participants from the experimental group expressed lower level of homophobia compared with the control group. The results unambiguously disclose that the experimental exposure to (The Parade) encouraged positive attitudes toward gay people and, weakened the correlation between homophobic self-positioning and the aforementioned attitudes. This is consistent with the previous works suggesting that exposure to specific fictional narratives exercise considerable effects on attitudes and beliefs of the receivers (Cohen, 2001, 2006; Green & Brock, 2000; Farr & Degroult, 2008; Igartua, 2008; Igartua & Barrios, 2012; Igartua & Páez, 1997).

In particular, our research confirmed the results of previous studies suggesting that people exposed to narrative fiction with favourable representation of gay people, expressed more positive attitudes toward homosexuality (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Farr & Degroult, 2008; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Lee & Hicks, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Mazur & Emmers-Sommers, 2002; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Schiappa et al., 2005, 2006; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014).

In addition, the quantitative analysis also reveals that participants demonstrated solid agreement with the statement that they liked the film. They were a bit less sure about the personal and emotional relevance of the story. The participants showed more compliance with the cognitive aspects of evaluation while the personal and emotional relevance of the story was significantly less scored. This finding can be explained as a consequence of ego defense or threat of compromising participant’s own sexual identity (Zivanovic et al., 2014). Another explanation might be also found in previous researches suggesting importance of an explicit distinction between public and personal aversion toward homosexuality (Herek, 1987, 2009).

In this regard, there is a very high internal correlation in magnitude between personal relevance of the story (This story is relevant to me) and ego defense dimension of homophobia (If I were gay, I’d feel ashamed to go out in the street; A mere thought of an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex is frightening to me). This finding goes in line with early ideas about homophobia as a reaction to the influx of repressed homosexual impulses and ideas resulting in negative attitude toward same sex objects (Adams et al., 1996; West, 1977).

By revealing that the students from the control group expressed higher level of homophobia compared with the experimental group, the present study not only did it confirm the findings of previous media effect related researches but also found their relevance in Serbian context.

As Hypothesis 2 predicted, the present results suggest that viewers exposed to positive depiction of gay people, who are more identified with the homosexual protagonists, showed a more favorable attitude towards gay men. Thus, as predicted, there was a negative and direct correlation between the degree of identification with the main characters and the degree of homophobia: The higher degree of identification will be followed by the lower degree of homophobia.

The results acted in response to previous researches, evidencing persuasive impacts of films through the process of identification. Identification with characters perceived as a central mechanism explaining persuasion goes in line with the results of present research. More specifically, as a new contribution in view of attitude change toward homosexuality, the results are consistent with the findings of previous general studies focusing on the role of identification in the process of attitude change (Cohen, 2001, 2006; Igartua, 2008, 2010, 2012; Stephan, 1987; Green & Brock, 2000; Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010; Soto-Sanfiel et.al., 2010; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia 2014; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Vonofakou, Hewstone & Voci, 2007).

Furthermore, if we consider identification as an emotional and cognitive construct to a certain degree related to Transportation-imagery model, our results might be useful in studies that consider identification as a result of emotional and cognitive transportability (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002) or narrative engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009).

Having in mind that the main topic and overall content of the film dealt with the issue of prejudice toward gay people, it made sense to explore a potential interplay between the gender of participant and identification with the character as a correlation explaining prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation.

Despite the fact that men generally expressed higher levels of homophobia than women, this study showed that there was no significant difference between men and women with specific regard to the expressed degree of identification with the character. In other words, we found that gender as a mediating independent variable between the level of homophobia and identification, did not play a significant role. Simply (regardless of the gender), participants who were more identified with the tragic homosexual protagonists, showed more favourable attitude toward gay people. We find these results congruent with previous recent researches (Soto-Sanfiel et al., 2011; Soto-Sanfiel, et al., 2014), considering that they obtained similar results regarding the influence of gender in the magnitude of expressed identification with lesbian characters. This finding might be interpreted in light of the hypothesis that the capacity of empathizing and identifying with other person is rather an idividual quality of a particular person, than a gender or ethnicity related category (Rot, 2009).

Consequently, the results that indicate a small relevance of the gender as variable influencing identification are not convergent with other studies (Eyal & Rubin, 2003; Maccoby & Wilson, 1987), given that their results found evidence that female participants manifested significantly higher levels of identification than man did.

Even though both of these variables were associated with persuasive effects of the film, in general, there was no specific and significant interplay between these two components within a broader context of identification as a central construct. By all means, a future qualitative analysis is needed, in order to observe in detail the exact influence of the gender in the emotional and cognitive components associated with the process of identification.

Considering that the present research was primarily determined by the impact of situational factors influencing the attitude change, future research in this area should also incorporate individual disposition for emotional and cognitive empathy by measuring the extent to which participants experience identification, and in turn are persuaded by a narrative fiction.

Furthermore, given that the factor structure did not completely match the structure that Igartua (2010) reported, and taking into account that: items loaded mainly on Factor 2 while cognitive empathy factor loaded on Factor 3. Moreover, items from the “sensation of becoming a character” subscale loaded mainly on Factor 1. Emotional empathy, we considered that these findings require explanations of possible causes for this discrepancy.

First of all, we should remind that there is a possibility that under the current conditions, and with Serbian translation, Igartua’s (2010) scale did not function, probably due to a relatively small sample of participants in the present study.

On the other hand, the inconsistency with the original model is known in the literature as Haywood case and it might come as a result of various reasons (Brown, 2006; Byrne, 2010; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984). Furthermore, some of the possible reasons for structural discrepancies between Igartua's scale (2010) and the present CFA might be various as follows:

1) *Non-convergence* and under identification takes place generally if the original scale model is not consistent with the posterior factor analysis, it is due to very serious mistakes in how the scale is structurally specified or because there are very serious mistakes in the distribution of the data set (e.g., data reading error, mistakes in data calculation) (Boomsma & Hoogland 2001; Kolenikov et al., 2009).

2) *Sampling variation* caused by inappropriate factor convergence frequently arise with smaller samples and when the original scale has less structural constraints (i.e., a more inundated scale that freely estimates closer to all possible pathways). Inconsistencies may also take place with insufficient samples, for example, because of arbitrary sampling variability when the population value is near zero (Anderson & Gerbing 1984; Byrne, 2010).

3) *Distributional misspecification* means that the division of the data is not standard, likelihood methods are not fully appropriate (Satorra, 1990; Satorra & Bentler 1994).

4) *Structural misspecification* refers to the structure of the model, in which the number of latent variables and the relations between the variables in the model are not specified correctly (Yuan, Marshall & Bentler 2003).

This indeed might be the case with the Igartua's scale because high content overlap of certain items yields high correlations between them. Negative error variance also might come as a result of a small sample or misspecified model (model that do not fit the data at all) (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1984).

Finally and most probably, one of the possible causes might be multicolinearity of the manifest variables which is a phenomenon in which two or more variables are highly correlated and one can be linearly predicted from the other at nontrivial level of accuracy (Brown, 2006).

Consistent with Brown (2006), the lack of factor structure accuracy, probably underlies the fact as suggested by Moyer-Guse´(2008) that identification as a complex construct is regarded of in different ways across the literature, and consequently, there is no, so far, reliable and definite instrument to measure identification. Many of the existing scales according to Moyer-Guse´ (2008) tend to combine identification with other related dimensions such as similarity, liking, and wishful identification. Before identification with characters can be adequately measured, a reliable scale must be agreed upon.

Furthermore, future studies should observe and confirm in more detail the exact dimensionality of identification, in order to have a more accurate interdependence of its dimensions.

As we wanted to explore the relationships between intergroup contact, the quantity and quality of contact**,** and prejudice toward persons of homosexual orientation, we tested the correlations between different variables, choosing the initial homophobia score obtained before the film projection.

In line with our **Hypothesis 3** and **4,** homophobia score was significantly and negatively related to quantity of contact with both gay and lesbian persons. We also found positive correlation between the quality of contact with gay people and the level of positive evaluation of the film. In general, participants with larger number of homosexual friends and frequent interaction and contact with homosexual persons tended to be less homophobic. In addition, we obtained positive correlation between the identification and the quantity of contact with homosexual persons. People who had more contact with homosexual persons were more likely to identify with the protagonist of the film. In addition, positive contact was followed by higher identification with the film's main character.

As follows, converging with our findings, a number of previous researches have shown the importance of this variable:

Firstly, Allport's Contact Hypothesis (1954) provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of contact in improving intergroup attitudes. Allport's hypothesis, consistent with our results, suggests that a quality relationship with the members of other group can be an effective way to develop positive attitudes toward that group. Social contacts vary in *intensity* (frequency of contacts, number of participants in a situation where there is contact) and *quality* (the nature of the interaction with members of the other group). Contact Hypothesis is mainly focused on quality. Specifically, Allport (1954) holds a view that the contact itself is not sufficient to correct the attitudes of individuals towards another group, but the contact must include equal status among members of different groups.

A contact that meets this criterion to a greater extent promotes positive attitudes toward another group more than those that don't meet them. On the other hand, *pleasantness of the contact* according to the findings of our research showed also to play an important role with regard to determination of the level of prejudice toward gays (before and after viewing the film).

Furthermore, in consistence with earlier studies (Hicks & Lee, 2006; Hodson, 2008, 2011; Lance, 2008; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Christ, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011), the present research showed that the contact not only leads to improvement of attitudes toward members of other groups in a specific situation, but also affects the perception of the members of the group.

Particularly important for the present study is the fact that our results related to effectiveness of the contact in reducing prejudices against gay people, found support in other previous researches (Hicks & Lee 2006; Hodson et al., 2009; Hodson & Busseri, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2013; Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007).

In other words, the effects of the contact have the capacity for generalization to other situations and other groups. In that sense, Pettigrew (2006) suggests, that intergroup friendships actually are associated with prejudice the reduction against the other group. Thus, *friendship* is a key concept of the contact theory, given that precisely the friendship includes all of the essential conditions specified by Allport (1954). This concept includes the aspect of quantity, but also the one that concerns the quality of the contact. Such an attitude about the importance of *friendship* as a form of contact produces a focus on affective processes as key mediators of the relationship between the contact and the change of attitude, which is dominant in our study.

Despite the fact that the number of participants of this research who have contact with gay people is relatively small, the findings of the present research also specify that the experience of contact with two or three gay people are associated with more positive attitudes towards members of this group than the experience of contact with only one person. This result goes in line with other previous studies (Herek, 2000; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). So, even though the acquaintance with only one member of this group resulted in more positive attitudes than in case of not having any acquaintance at all among this population. Only the participants who knew at least two members of homosexual population were getting consistently significantly different results from those respondents who did not know anybody from this population. As a possible explanation of this finding, we believe that acquaintance with more than one member of another group enables comprehension of variability within the group, and reduces the probability that their behavior could be perceived as atypical.

Finally, the findings of the present research indicate that reduction of prejudice toward gay people, intergroup contact and attitude change through the exposure of the participants to narrative fiction are highly correlated. Taking into account that there is a small number of studies (Levin, Van Laar & Sidanius, 2003) confirming the importance of both causal directions, the future studies should answer the question whether these findings support the argument that making contact with members of the other group changes attitudes positively towards this group

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), or the individuals who initially have more positive attitudes towards the other group, tend more to come into contact with members of that group (Detenber et al., 2013).

As predicted by our **Hypothesis 5**, men expressed higher level of homophobia than woman did. The differences in attitudes towards gay men after watching the film, considering the respondent's gender, were more pronounced, i.e., more negative in male than in female participants. Furthermore, as our results suggest, men of the sample are generally more intolerant than women, which can be a consequence of the fact that in our culture men are mainly more restrained, less empathic than women and that homosexuality seems to them as a kind of weakness, believing that the strength of a man is largely determined by his sexuality (Gentry, 1987; Herek, 1988; Kite, 1984; Whitley, 1988). On the other hand, female participants opted in lower percentage for a negative attitude before viewing the film, suggesting thus, that female students are more tolerant with regard to homosexuality than men. A possible explanation of obtained difference in attitudes towards gay men due to gender may be, according to Lamar & Kite (1998), generalized beliefs about gender roles. Heterosexual men are more likely than heterosexual women to reject those who break gender roles. Heterosexual men will experience a violation of gender roles more seriously when the alleged perpetrator is a man, which may explain the negative attitude towards gay men or greater condemnation. Based on the results we can conclude that male participants generally opt for or against homosexuality before and after viewing the film.

This finding goes in line with the results of numerous previous researches suggesting that gender as a social and demographic variable proved to be significant determinant of the formation of attitudes towards homosexuality (Decoo, 2014; Longin, 2014; Rodríguez-Castro et al, 2013).

In addition, more pronounced homophobic attitudes of men (before and after viewing the film) are in consistence with earlier studies suggesting that heterosexual persons tend to have more homophobic attitudes towards the members of the same gender (Gentry, 1987; Herek , 2002; Whitley & Kite, 1995).

As a proposal for future study stands the fact that all the participants of the present research declared as heterosexuals, so it was impossible to reveal any potential interplay between homosexual orientation of the participants and identification with homosexual character.

As **Hypothesis 6** indicated, religiosity had a direct effect on the degree of homophobia and attitude change such that there was a substantial negative correlation between the participant's expressed degree of religiosity and the attitude change generated by viewing the film (Parade).

The study reveals a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward gay men with regard to whether religion is important for the participant or not, and that there is a statistically significant correlation between attitudes towards gay people and assessing the importance of religion. Participants for whom religion is more important in life have a more negative attitude towards homosexual men and women in contrast to participants for whom religion is not important part of life.

Interestingly, taking into account the fact that the participants of this research were representatives of two monotheistic religions (Christians and Muslims), our findings consistant with Detenber et al., (2013), disclose the fact that Muslim participants showed generally higher degree of homophobia (before and after viewing the film) in comparison to Christian participants. This observation unambiguously indicates that there are significant distinctions among different religions, and that neither all religions nor all kinds of religiousness articulate the same nature and degree of homophobia. This observation is supported by previous findings suggesting that the principal factors associated with negative attitudes towards gay people are religious orientation, fundamentalism, and whether a person was born as Christian (Besen & Zicklin, 2007; Shackelford & Besser, 2007). As a support to our findings, we may also refer to (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009) who affirm that, specifically in the United States; Judaism, Catholicism and fundamental Protestant majority are considered the most liberal in terms of their attitude toward homosexuality.

This finding may also be explained through the fact that homosexuality is traditionally condemned by Islam. In addition, Muslim religious law (shariah) imposes a penalty for homosexual activities. This sentence has been interpreted variously as a penalty, flogging, imprisonment or death. This observation might also be interpreted in the light of the fact, as suggested by (Siker, 2007), that most Muslims understand Islam as a way of life that covers both culture and politics, most of them consider homosexuality as a part of religious prohibitions and very few of them consider gay rights as a part of basic and fundamental human rights.

As a support to this interpretation, we may recall that, in December 2014, the Pope declared that the church should help parents to support their gay children. In addition, he explained that Catholic leaders have an obligation to help families handle this "unusual situation" (Molloy, 2014). These words of the Pope, show that homosexuality, even though far from accepted in Catholicism, is significantly more tolerant and accepting of homosexuality than Islam.

Furthermore, the study discloses a statistically significant difference in attitudes toward gay men with regard to whether religion is important for the participant or not, and that there is a statistically significant correlation between attitudes towards gay people and assessing the importance of religion.

Participants for whom religion is more important in life have a more negative attitude towards homosexual men and women in contrast to participants for whom religion is not important part of life. As confirmed in previous studies (Koenig & Büssing, 2010; Longin, 2014; Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2009), the independent variable of religiosity proved to be significantly associated with the attitude towards homosexuality. The results showed that the higher the degree of religiosity, the more negative was the attitude towards gay people.

The correlation between the importance of religion and attitudes towards gay men and women is a significant, positive and moderate. Interestingly, the participants who expressed high degree of religiousness compared with moderately religious participants, had very low scores of identification with the homosexual character, and similarly very low degree of appreciation of the story. Expectedly, participants who declared themselves as atheist achieved higher scores of identification with the character than religious participants.

The findings of the present research are supported by a large number of previous studies claiming that religious people tend to express restrictive and intolerant attitude to everything that is new and unknown, and everything that breaks the conventional norms and values (Allport & Ross, 1967; Koenig & Büssing, 2010; Longin, 2014; Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2009).

Also, highly religious people have a negative attitude, pursuant to the position of the Church towards homosexuality as an unnatural phenomenon which primarily does not serve for continuation of human species. Those who are less religious have more liberal views on different sexual orientation (Longin, 2014).

Moreover, in consistence with the posture of Koenig & Büssing, (2010) our results suggest that low and moderately religious participants were mainly undecided on the issue of normality / pathology of homosexuality, while highly religious participants were almost equally divided between those who are undecided and those who treat homosexuality as a pathological phenomenon.

When it comes to understanding of homosexuality as a pathological phenomenon, highly our results reveal that religious participants mostly opted for this view, which is logical to some extent, considering the findings of previous researches, suggesting that high religiosity means an aversion to small groups such as gay people, even categorizing it as an anomaly or disorder (Allport & Ross, 1967; Koenig & King, 2011; Longin, 2014).

Taking into account that religiousness is an extremely complex dimension per se, future study, as proposed by Koenig & Büssing (2010), should treat this variable in a holistic way distinguishing and measuring various sub-dimensions such as: ORA-organizational religious activity; NORA- non-organizational religious activity; IR- intrinsic religiosity; ER- extrinsic religiosity.

The present research also provides general theoretical support for the last **Hypothesis 7**, predicting the existence of the third person effect after viewing the film (Parade). As hypothesized, in comparison to others, the participants assessed themselves as less susceptible and vulnerable to the effects of the film.

The third person effect hypothesis of the present research is fully confirmed - the third person effect appeared as significant on the participants who were experimentally exposed to the film (Parade). This effect has been verified in the findings that the participants consistently perceived themselves as less susceptible and vulnerable to content of the film, while they evaluated others as less resistant and more susceptible to the film content. On the other hand, there was no significant positive correlation between the level of the third person effect and identification with the character. Gender and religiosity as independent variables did not correlate significantly with the third person effect either, so there is not any visible indicator explaining a possible interplay of the mentioned dimensions, given that the quantitative approach of this research did not allow us to draw any substantial parallel explaining any potential interdependence of these variables.

On the other hand, interestingly, there was a negative correlation between the extent the participants identified with the character (Mirko) and the magnitude of the third person effect. The less identification with the character the participants achieved, the higher level of religiosity, and the third person effect they expressed.

In view of our results, we will try to indicate the possible causes that produced this effect. One reason may be that participants had varying perceptions of the social desirability of personal experience in relation to homosexuality.

Correspondingly, these homophobic participants, in comparison with others less homophobic, considered homosexuality more socially desirable than they are personally disposed to accept as a socially acceptable norm. In other words, the participants of the present research might have been reluctant to admit that they are influenced by the message, given that such recognition reflects negatively on their self enhancement (Eveland & McLeod, 1999).

This finding also suggests that third person effect may be driven by participants' beliefs that homosexuality should be socially accepted in general terms, even though they don't see themselves influenced by the film argument.

In line with previous researches (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000; Perloff, 2002), assuming that the third person effect is associated with their aspiration to preserve self-esteem, participants who showed higher level of homophobia, were generally more unlikely to admit being influenced by socially desirable messages that are challenging their self-views. On the other hand, our findings are only to some extent convergent with the earlier research (Henriksen & Flora, 1999) identifying social desirability of the message as a key factor explaining third person effect.

Social desirability of the message proved to be an ambiguous moderator of perceptions of influence on self, simply because did all the participants did not perceive a positive representation of homosexuality as a socially desirable message, nor all participants viewed the film as a socially undesirable message. In other words, participants who viewed the message of the film as more accepting expressed higher presumed influence on self, than those who viewed the message as undesirable.

Finally, if consider our findings as a consequence of the fact that all the participants of the present research declared themselves as heterosexuals, we might converge with Griffin (2012) who perceives identification with a particular social group on issues that are relevant to that group, as ego involvement.

People with very distinct views and strong identification with the group, often accuse the media of the intentional broadcast of stories against their side (view), which is called a hostile media bias (Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985).

Although the findings on the presence of the third person effect are generally converging with the referred previous researches, future study should investigate and identify what latent factor in particular, (or many of them) is responsible for, so much the appearance of this effect as the implications of its influence.

7. Conclusions and limitations

The fact that present study refused to identify only one process by which only one specific variable has an impact on attitudes, gave us one of the most exciting new domains of research within the interaction between a variety of additional variables that have shown to be significantly relevant to attitude change.

Consequently, our conclusions have several implications. In consistence with previous researches, the results of the present study confirm that exposure to narrative fiction with favourable representation of gay people, may lead to more support toward homosexuality (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007; Calzo & Ward, 2009; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Lee & Hicks, 2011; Levina, Valdo & Fitzgerald, 2000; Mazur & Emmers-Sommers, 2002; Schiappa, 2005, 2006; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014).

Our conclusions are also consistent with the findings of previous general studies focusing on the role of identification in the process of attitude change (Allport, 1954; Green & Brock, 2000; Cohen, 2001, 2006; Igartua, 2008, 2010, 2012; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010; Soto-Sanfiel et.al., 2010; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia 2014; Stephan, 1987; Voci & Hewstone, 2003; Vonofakou, Hewstone & Voci, 2007).

In researching the relevance of other factors that might influence attitudes toward gay people (inter-contact theory, religiosity, third person effect as well as role of gender), the conclusions of the present study align with other respective studies (Hicks & Lee 2006; Hodson et al., 2009; Hodson & Busseri, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2013; Vonofakou, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007).

As a result, a general contribution of the present study was in the first place, providing quite new information on the reception and the persuasive effects of narrative that depicts the life of gay characters in a Serbian context. Another contribution of this empirical research was the application of a wide range of variables and theoretical approaches whose principal aim was to answer the question whether and how, through what mechanisms, the narrative fiction influences attitude changes.

In this regard, one of particular contributions of the present studies is the exploration of the Igartua's (2010) identification scale (EDI) and its application in Serbia.

As a consequence, the construct of identification as a general latent factor along with its pertaining three first-order factors (emotional empathy, cognitive empathy and sensation of becoming the character or merging) merely illustrated rather than provided substantial evidence that there were differences in individual disposition regarding the degree of identification. Accordingly, future studies should focus more on individual dispositions and personal qualities that could explain and determine more specifically, the degree to which people achieve identification with character while being exposed to narrative fictions.

Taking into account that earlier approaches focused on explaining individual distinctions in cognitive and emotional abilities for identification and other related constructs are to a certain extent scarce (Dal Cin, Zanna & Fong, 2004; Green, 2004, 2006; Brock & Livingstone 2004), some future research should present a more complete observation of the distinctive ways in which persuasive messages are processed and what the consequential effects are.

In addition, identifying individual characteristics that moderate the impact of narrative fictions on identification with characters, is an important goal because including this variable to the existing theoretical framework of identification as a moderating process, would enhance its explanatory power.

Despite its ambitious range, this research finds some limitations that should be taken into account. Primarily, although a quantitative method employed in this research provided descriptive data that can be expressed in numbers and derive important facts from research data, including preference trends, differences between experimental and control groups, it is evident that a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches would give us a variety of additional information that is essential in designing future research. While quantitative and qualitative research each have their advantages and weaknesses, they can be particularly valuable in combination with one another. In future studies, we could use qualitative research to identify the factors that affect the key areas of attitude change, then use that information to devise quantitative research that assesses how these factors would affect the effectiveness of persuasion in total, as it was done in some previous researches (Hodgkin, 2008; Soto-Sanfiel, Ibiti & Palencia, 2014; Wooley, 2009).

After all, present research has identified a phenomenon that may have certain variations depending on ethnicities, age, sexual orientation, religiousness or intergroup contact. Thus, future studies could be expanded by including other segments of population, and thus to corroborate these results in a wider proportion of the population. In terms of methodological approach, the present research is limited by the fact that only explicit measurement of attitude change was employed, which as a consequence impeded us to make empirical distinction between implicit and explicit measures of attitude, and implications of the foregoing for attitude change.

Explicit measurement techniques applied in this study are at the same time one of the limiting factors regarding the attitude measurement issue. Measuring attitudes in an explicit form of questionnaire means that the subject is asked to evaluate the object of the attitude on a certain scale of evaluation or in the form of direct, open reporting about the object of the attitude (Schwarz, 2007). It is believed that the attitudes measured in such a way are under conscious control of the subject, that are intentional and that they require cognitive resources (Nosek, 2007).

Furthermore, as our results reveal, the religiousness as a variable proved to be very significant in the context of prediction of homophobic attitudes (before and after viewing the film). Given that religiosity was evaluated only by one item "Religion plays an important role in my life" it would be of great importance to treat this variable in the context of its impact on the attitude change of participants and more importantly, how it is relevant and applicable to attitude change resistance.

Moreover, considering religiosity as multidimensional and complex construct per se, measurement with one item ought to be interpreted only as an indication that future studies should observe in more details.

Accordingly, in future studies it would be very important to explain and to set apart the religiosity to its all immanent dimensions, and check which exactly of the dimensions of religiosity is the most responsible both for attitude change and for resistance to change attitude at all.

It is also important to open another question: Is the fact that more important attitudes are less likely to change, good or bad? Whether the society encourages consistency of attitudes in important issues, whereas the consistencies of attitudes that are related to our personal interests are strongly discouraged? Error of excessive belief is so obvious that some clinical psychologists report that change resistant attitudes and stable beliefs are dangerous to our mental health (Abelson, 1988).

These and similar messages warn individuals not to be consistent in their attitudes, beliefs and convictions. On the other hand, strong positive beliefs are often positively valued in everyday relationships, politics, and media. In other words, one should have strong and stable beliefs because frequent changes will not be positively perceived.

This research and the results of the research have shown us that there are no stable and strictly determined rules on how a particular variable affects the persuasive process. The state of current empirical material is such that there is a lack of a superior principle that could integrate all theoretical approaches within a unique hierarchical line in the context of persuasive strength and effect on the recipient.

In future research, it would be necessary to place the questions on which previous theories and theoretical approaches have not yet given the generally accepted and unambiguous answer: What are the situations and the most appropriate mechanisms for the attitude change? What are the most appropriate conditions and circumstances for the change of attitudes? In this context we can allude to the fact that credible and less credible messages do not have the same effects, as well as, the fact that motivated and unmotivated audiences do not process information in the same way (Eagly & Chaiken 1993; O'Keefe, 2003). Precisely, despite the fact that we wonder whether variables such as Identification, Empathy, etc. are appropriate mechanisms for persuasion, we can also, in future studies, try to answer which one is more important: What fundamental processes might be responsible for explaining some regularities and patterns in a process of persuasion, taking into account the fact that one variable in a given situation affects persuasion through one mechanism, and in another situation through another mechanism?

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8.1 List of films and series

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Carruthers, J.H. (Writer), & Nixon, A. (Director). (1970-1977). *All My Children* [Television broadcast]. United States: ABC.

Chaiken, I. & Troche, R. (Writers). (2004-2009). *The L Word* [Television broadcast]. United States, Canada: Showtime.

Collins, D. & Metzler, D. (Writers), & Collins, D. & Metzler, D. (Directors). (2003-2007). *Queer Eye for a Straight Guy* [*Television broadcast*]. United States: Bravo.

Cowen, R. & Lipman, D. (Writers). (2000-2005). *Queer as Folk* [Television broadcast]. United States: Showtime.

DeGeneres, E. (Producer), & Heche, A. (Director). (2000). *If These Walls Could Talk 2* [Motion picture]. United States: Home Box Office.

Demme, J. (Producer), & Demme, J. (Director). (1993). *Philadelphia* [Motion picture]. United States: TriStar Pictures.

Epstein, R. & Friedman, J. (Producers) & Epstein, R. & Friedman, J. (Directors). (1995). *The Celluloid Closet* [Motion picture]. United States: TriStar Pictures.

Kohan, D. & Mutchnick, M. (Writers), & Burrows, J. (Director). (1998-2006). *Will & Grace* [Television broadcast]. United States: NBC.

Manso, L. (Producer), & Fesser, J. (Director). (2008). *El Camino* [Motion picture]. Spain: Altafilms.

Maljevic, B. (Producer), & Skerlic, S. (Director). (1997). *Do Koske* [Motion picture]. Srbija: Avala Film.

Marinkovic, D. (Producer), & Marinkovic, D. (Director). (2004). *Disi duboko* [Motion picture]. Serbia and Montenegro:Avala Film.

Patljak, J. (Producer), & Matanic, D. (Director). (2002). *Fine mrtve djevojke* [Motion picture]. Serbia and Croatia: Alka film.

Samardzic, LJ. (Producer), & Milosavljevic, D. (Director). (1999). *Tockovi* [Motion picture]. Srbija: Avala Film.

Schamus, J., McMurtry, L. & Ossana, D. (Producers), Lee, A. (Director). (2005). *Brokeback Mountain* [Motion picture]. United States: Focus Features.

Smajic, S. (Producer), & Imamovic, A. (Director). (2005). *Go West* [Motion Picture]. Serbia: Avala Film.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is a part of my project of investigation that is being developed within my doctoral studies at Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona (Departament de Comunicación Audiovisual I Publicitat). The purpose of this investigation is to extend the knowledge on the reception of cinematography and its influence. Particularly, we need to get your opinion on how some frequent film characters and social groups are represented in films and more importantly how they deserve, or should be represented.

In the first part it will be firstly illustrated and explained how to answer the questions. Further on, you will answer some general questions regarding your cinematographic preferences, i.e. what kind of films you like, what genre you prefer, what characters you find interesting more than others, etc.

When you answer all the questions, you will watch a film and you will be given another questionnaire that will be specifically referring to the film and its characters that you have seen.

The questionnaire consists of several sets of questions. Please, read carefully each one of them and encircle one of the answers. Respond sincerely. There are no correct and incorrect answers. In addition, your participation in the study is **absolutely anonymous**, so it is important to answer all these questions honestly and sincerely.

Now we will tell you how to answer the questionnaire. For example, you will find questions like this:

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I rather watch films at cinemas than at home					

To answer you must evaluate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement and mark within the appropriate box. For example: If it is completely true that you rather watch films at cinemas than at home, you must mark in the box like this:

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I rather watch films at cinemas than at home					X

On the opposite, if it is not true that you rather watch films at cinemas than at home, you must mark in the box like this:

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I rather watch films at cinemas than at home	X				

Now, to begin with the questionnaire, answer these questions, please.

Code number:_______________ (For example, If you are born on 23 of April 1991. Your code number will be: 230491

Age:
Gender (mark in the line): Male ____ Female ____

What is your religion: (Write a X besides the appropriate answer).
Christian ____
Muslim ____
Atheist ____
Other (indicate) ____

Tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the next statement. Mark within the box.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
Religion plays an important role in my life					

What is your nationality? (Write an X besides the appropriate answer):

Serbian _____
Bosnian_____
Croat_______
Others (indicate) ______________

What is your sexual orientation? (Write a X besides the appropriate answer):

Heterosexual______
Homosexual_______
Others (indicate)_______________

What is your favourite kind of films from the list? (Write a X besides the appropriate answer and select just one option)

Local films (Ex Yugoslavian)____
American from Hollywood____
European_____
Asian_____
I do not watch films____

What is your favourite genre of films? (write a X besides the appropriate answer, and select up to 3 options)

All kind of films____
Romance____
Adventures____
Action____
Suspense____
Comedies____
Horror____
Avant-garde____
Historical____
Dramas____
Science fiction____
Animation____
Fantasy____
Crimes____
Westerns____
I don't like films____

Tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the next statement. Mark within the box.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
The films should be more socially engaged					

Do you have any friends amongst other ethnic groups (Muslims, Croats, Gipsies)?
Yes. Indicate how many_________

None__________

How often do you interact with members of other ethnic groups? (write a X besides the appropriate answer)

- everyday _______
- several times a week ________
- several times a month ________
- several times a year_________
- less than above mentioned ________

Do you have any friends amongst gays?

Yes. Indicate how many___________
None__________

Do you have any friends amongst lesbians?

Yes. Indicate how many___________
None.__________

How often do you generally interact with homosexuals of any gender? (write a X besides the appropriate answer).

- everyday________
- several times a week________
- several times a month________
- several times a year__________
- less than above mentioned___________

Generally speaking your relations with men homosexuals (gays) are:
(Mark within the box).

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
Close					
Pleasant					
Equal					
I don't interact with gays at all					

Generally speaking your relations with women homosexuals (lesbians) are:
(Mark within the box).

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
Close					
Pleasant					
Equal					
I don't interact with gays at all					

Please read carefully each statement and express to what extent you agree or disagree with each one of them. Mark within the box.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I would never insult gays.					
Any action against gay people for me is unacceptable.					
If we were well organized, we could re-educate homosexuals.					
I would cooperate with persons of homosexual orientation.					
Homosexuality should be eradicated.					
I don’t understand why some people are so disgusted at the mention of gay population.					
I do not see why should sex among gay population be seen as something dirty.					
It does not bother me to see a film with homosexual themes.					
When I see gays I feel sick and my heart starts pounding.					
It disgusts me when I see two people of the same sex passionately kissing.					
The fact that somebody is homosexual does					

not prevent me to appreciate him as a person.					
Being gay does not mean being less valuable.					
I do not judge people based on who they go to bed with.					
A homosexual is only politically correct name for a fagot.					
Homosexuals are not people worthy of respect.					
Gay is OK.					
It is unacceptable that a civilized society persecutes homosexuals as if they were beasts.					
Homosexuals should be isolated in order not to destroy our society.					
Homosexuals are a tumor of any society.					
Being gay is immoral.					
If I were gay, I would be proud about it.					
I'd rather kill myself than be a gay.					
If I was attracted to persons of the same sex, I would ignore it and try to be normal.					
If I were gay, I’d feel ashamed to go out to the street.					
A mere thought of an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex is frightening to me.					

You will watch a film now. Please try to pay a lot of attention on the content and do it in an absolute silence.

Now after wieving the film, we kindly ask you to answer the following statements.

Tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the next statement. Mark within the box.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I liked the film					
I enjoyed the film					
I think that the representation of the homosexual persons is adequate					
Other people might think that the representation of the homosexual persons is adequate					
The representation of the heterosexual persons is adequate					
I think that other people might enjoy a film where homosexuals are represented in a positive way					
I think that other people might be positively affected by this film					
This story is relevant to me					

Now we present you series of statements and you have to tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each one of them. Mark in the appropriate box.

While watching this film:

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I felt emotionally involved with Mirko's (the protagonist) feelings					
I understood how Mirko acts, thinks and feels					
I understood Mirko’s feelings or emotions					
I imagined how I would act if I were Mirko					
I was concerned about what was happening to Mirko					
I tried to imagine Mirko’s feelings, thoughts and reactions					
I tried to see things I from Mirko’s point of view					
I felt as if I were Mirko					
I myself experienced Mirko’s emotional reaction					
I had the impression of living Mirko’s story myself					
I identified with Mirko					

Please read carefully each statement and express to what extent you agree or disagree with each one of them. Mark within the box.

	1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Totally agree
I would never insult gays.					
Any action against gay people for me is unacceptable.					
If we were well organized, we could re-educate homosexuals.					
I would cooperate with persons of homosexual orientation.					
Homosexuality should be eradicated.					
I don't understand why some people are so disgusted at the mention of gay population.					
I do not see why should sex among gay population be seen as something dirty.					
It does not bother me to see a film with homosexual themes.					
When I see gays I feel sick and my heart starts pounding.					
It disgusts me when I see two people of the same sex passionately kissing.					
The fact that somebody is homosexual does not prevent me to appreciate him as a person.					
Being gay does not mean being less valuable.					
I do not judge people based on who they go to bed with.					
A homosexual is only politically correct name for a fagot.					
Homosexuals are not people worthy of respect.					
Gay is OK.					
It is unacceptable that a civilized society persecutes homosexuals as if they were beasts.					
Homosexuals should be isolated in order not to destroy our society.					
Homosexuals are a tumor of any society.					
Being gay is immoral.					

If I were gay, I would be proud about it.					
I'd rather kill myself than be a gay.					
If I was attracted to persons of the same sex, I would ignore it and try to be normal.					
If I were gay, I'd feel ashamed to go out to the street.					
A mere thought of an intimate relationship with a person of the same sex is frightening to me.					

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Appendix B

Technical specifications and plot summary of *The Parade* (2011)

Director: Srdjan Dragojevic

Writer: Srdjan Dragojevic

Stars: Nikola Kojo, Milos Samolov, Hristina Popovic

Date of release: 31. 10. 2011.

Runtime: 115 min

Color: Color

Aspect Ratio: 2.35 : 1

Camera: Arriflex 535, Zeiss Lenses

Plot summary

Since the police refuses to secure the Pride parade, Radmilo a gay man (Miloš Samolov) turns to Limun (Nikola Kojo), who is the owner of the security agency and war veteran. As he is not able to gather a team for protection of the gay parade in Belgrade, Limun decides to form a "team" in the region.

Limun and the leader of gay activists Radmilo (Miloš Samolov) start a journey through the countries of the region in which Lemon fought during the nineties. On the list of his enemies against whom he fought, but with whom in those turbulent times he traded are Roko, Croatian war veteran (Goran Navojec), Halil, petty criminal from Bosnia (Dejan Aćimović), and Azem, an Albanian from Kosovo (Toni Mihajlovski).

After various ups and downs, Lemon succeeds to gather a handful of colourful mercenaries, but on his return to Belgrade the "samurai" will deal with the most challenging situations, risking their own lives. Lemon, a former judo champion, a criminal and a war hero, comes out from the transition of the first decade of the new century, like most people, as a loser. His small security agencies provide services to the "winners" of transition, tycoons and celebrities from the entertainment industry.

Lemon’s fiancée, Biserka, owner of the beauty parlor, insists on a "sophisticated" marriage ceremony, more appropriate to the new times. Lemon eventually agrees, and he and Biba meet Mirko, a theater director, another transition loser who instead of theater plays - directs weddings.

Mirko's partner, Radmilo, a successful veterinarian, does not approve of Mirko’s "activism" and believes that the Pride Parade brings nothing to improve the LBGT community. The clash of two worlds ends expectedly at first – by physical violence. Lemon’s fiancee leaves him, and to Mirko the "close encounter" with Limun was the last strow - he's already got the immigration visa for Canada and wants to leave the country forever.

Radmilo offers Limun a deal - his agency will provide protection for the Pride Parade, and Mirko will agree to organize wedding for Limun and Biserka. However, since everyone from Limun’s environment refuses to participate in the enterprise "beneath their dignity", Lemon has a great idea. The thing is getting complicated.

Finally, in attempting to help Limun dies together with Mirko in a brutal fight with homophobic football hooligans.